IVANHOE.

IVANHOE:

A ROMANCE.

BY "THE AUTHOR OF WAVERLEY," &c.

Now fitted the halter, now traversed the cart,
And often took leave,—but seem'd loth to depart!

PRIOR.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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CHAPTER I.

Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more,
Or close the wall up with our English dead.
———————— And you, good yeomen,
Whose limbs were made in England, shew us here
The mettle of your pasture—let us swear
That you are worth your breeding.

King Henry V.

CEDRIC, although not greatly confident in Ulrica's message, omitted not to communicate her promise to the Black Knight and Locksley. They were well pleased to find they had a friend within the place, who might, in the moment of need, be able to facilitate their entrance, and readily agreed with the Saxon that a storm, under whatever disadvantages, ought to be attempted, as

the only means of liberating the prisoners now in the hands of the cruel Front-de-Bœuf.

"The royal blood of Alfred is endangered," said Cedric.

"The honour of a noble lady is in peril," said the Black Knight.

"And, by the Saint Christopher at my baldric," said the good yeoman, "were there no other cause than the safety of that poor faithful knave, Wamba, I would jeopard a joint ere a hair of his head were hurt."

"And so would I," said the Friar; "what, sirs! I trust well that a fool—I mean, d'ye see me, sirs, a fool that is free of his guild and master of his craft, and can give as much relish and flavour to a cup of wine as ever a flitch of bacon can—I say, brethren, such a fool shall never want a wise clerk to pray for or fight for him at a strait, while I can say a mass or flourish a partizan."

And with that he made his heavy halbert to play around his head as a shepherd boy flourishes his light crook.

"True, Holy Clerk," said the Black Knight;

"true as if Saint Dunstan himself had said it.—And now, good Locksley, were it not well that noble Cedric should assume the direction of this assault?"

"Not a jot, I," returned Cedric; "I have never been wont to study either how to take or how to hold out those abodes of tyrannic power, which the Normans have erected in this groaning land. I will fight among the foremost; but my honest neighbours well know I am not a trained soldier in the discipline of wars, or the attack of strongholds."

"Since it stands thus with noble Cedric," said Locksley, "I am most willing to take on me the direction of the archery; and ye shall hang me up on my own trysting tree, an the defenders be permitted to shew themselves over the walls without being stuck with as many shafts as there are cloves in a gammon of bacon at Christmas."

"Well said, stout yeoman," said the Black Knight; "and if I be thought worthy to have a charge in these matters, and can find among these brave men so many as are willing to follow a true knight, for so I may call myself, I am ready, with

such skill as my experience has taught me, to lead them to the attack of these walls."

The parts being thus distributed to the leaders, they commenced the first assault, of which the reader has already heard the issue.

When the barbican was carried, the Sable Knight sent notice of the happy event to Locksley, requesting him, at the same time, to keep such an observation on the castle as might prevent the defenders from combining their force for a sudden sally, and recovering the out-work that they had lost. This the knight was chiefly desirous of avoiding, conscious that the men whom he led, being hasty and untrained volunteers, imperfectly armed and unaccustomed to discipline, must upon any sudden attack fight at great disadvantage with the veteran soldiers of the Norman knights, who were well provided with arms both defensive and offensive; and who, to match the zeal and high spirit of the besiegers, had all the confidence which arises from perfect discipline and the habitual use of weapons.

The knight employed the interval in causing to be constructed a sort of floating bridge or long

raft, by means of [redacted] to cross the moat in despite of the resistance of the enemy. This was a work of some time, which the leaders the less regretted, as it gave Ulrica time to execute her plan of diversion in their favour, whatever that might be.

But when the raft was completed, "It avails not waiting here longer," said the Black Knight; "the sun is descending to the west—and I have that upon my hands which will not permit me to tarry with you another day. Besides, it is a marvel if the horsemen come not upon us from York, unless we speedily accomplish our purpose. Wherefore, one of ye go to Locksley, and bid him commence a discharge of arrows on the opposite side of the castle, and move forward as if about to assault it; and you, true English hearts, stand by me, and be ready to thrust the raft endlong across the moat whenever the postern on our side is thrown open. Follow me boldly across, and aid me to burst yon sally-port in the main wall of the castle. As many of you as like not this service, or are but ill armed to meet it, do you man the top of the outwork, draw your bow-strings to

your ears, and mind you quell with your shot whatever shall appear to man the rampart—Noble Cedric, wilt thou take the direction of those which remain?"

"Not so, by the soul of Hereward!" said the Saxon; "lead I cannot; but may posterity curse me in my grave, if I follow not with the foremost wherever thou shalt point the way—The quarrel is mine, and well it becomes me to be in the van of the battle."

"Yet, bethink thee, noble Saxon!" said the knight, "thou hast neither hauberk nor corslet, nor aught but that light helmet, target, and sword."

"The better!" answered Cedric; "I shall be the lighter to climb these walls. And, forgive the boast, Sir Knight, thou shalt this day see the naked breast of a Saxon as boldly presented to the battle as ever ye beheld the steel corslet of a Norman."

"In the name of God, then," said the knight, "fling open the door, and launch the floating bridge."

The portal, which led from the inner-wall of the barbican to the moat, and which corresponded with a sally-port in the main wall of the castle, was now suddenly opened; the temporary bridge was then thrust forward, and soon flashed in the waters, extending its length between the castle and outwork, and forming a slippery and precarious passage for two men abreast to cross the moat. Well aware of the importance of taking the foe by surprise, the Black Knight, closely followed by Cedric, threw himself upon the bridge, and reached the opposite side. Here he began to thunder with his axe upon the gate of the castle, protected in part from the shot and stones cast by the defenders by the ruins of the former drawbridge, which the Templar had demolished in his retreat from the barbican, leaving the counterprize still attached to the upper part of the portal. The followers of the knight had no such shelter; two were instantly shot with cross-bow bolts, and two more fell into the moat; the others retreated back into the barbican.

The situation of Cedric and of the Black Knight was now truly dangerous, and would

have been still more so, but for the constancy of the archers in the barbican, who ceased not to shower their arrows upon the battlements, distracting the attention of those by whom they were manned, and thus affording a respite to their two chiefs from the storm of missiles by which they must have been otherwise overwhelmed. But their situation was eminently perilous, and was becoming more so with every moment.

"Shame on ye all!" cried De Bracy to the soldiers around him; "do ye call yourselves cross-bowmen, and let these two dogs keep their station under the walls of the castle?—Heave over the coping stones from the battlement, an better may not be—Get pick-axe and levers, and down with that huge pinnacle," pointing to a heavy piece of stone carved-work that projected from the parapet.

At this moment the besiegers caught sight of the red flag upon the angle of the tower which Ulrica had described to Cedric. The good yeoman Locksley was the first who was aware of it, as he was hasting to the outwork, impatient to see the progress of the assault.

"Saint George!" he cried, "Merry Saint George for England!—To the charge, bold yeomen!—why leave ye the good knight and noble Cedric to storm the pass alone?—Make in, mad Priest, show thou canst fight for thy rosary—make in, brave yeomen!—the castle is ours, we have friends within—See yonder flag, it is the appointed signal—Torquilstone is ours!—Think of honour, think of spoil—One effort, and the place is ours."

With that he bent his good bow, and sent a shaft right through the breast of one of the men-at-arms, who, under De Bracy's direction, was loosening a fragment from one of the battlements to precipitate on the heads of Cedric and the Black Knight. A second soldier caught from the hands of the dying man the iron crow, with which he heaved at and had loosened the stone pinnacle, when, receiving an arrow through his head-piece, he dropped from the battlements into the moat a dead man. The men-at-arms were daunted, for no armour seemed proof against the shot of this tremendous archer.

"Do you give ground, base knaves!" said De

Bracy; "*Mount joye Saint Dennis!*—Give me the lever."

And, snatching it up, he again assailed the loosened pinnacle, which was of weight enough, if thrown down, not only to have destroyed the remnant of the drawbridge, which sheltered the two foremost assailants, but also to have sunk the rude float of planks over which they had crossed. All saw the danger, and the boldest, even the stout Friar himself, avoided setting foot on the raft. Thrice did Locksley bend his shaft against De Bracy, and thrice did his arrow bound back from the knight's armour of proof.

"Curse on thy Spanish steel-coat!" said Locksley, "had English smith forged it, these arrows had gone through, an as if it had been silk or sendal." He then began to call out, "Comrades! friends! noble Cedric! bear back, and let the ruin fall."

His warning voice was unheard, for the din which the knight himself occasioned by his strokes upon the postern would have drowned twenty war-trumpets. The faithful Gurth indeed sprung forward on the planked bridge to

warn Cedric of his impending fate, or to share it with him. But his warning would have come too late; the massive pinnacle already tottered, and De Bracy would have accomplished his purpose, had not the voice of the Templar sounded in his ear.

"All is lost, De Bracy, the castle burns."

"Thou art mad to say so," replied the knight.

"It is all in a light flame on the western side. I have striven in vain to extinguish it."

With the stern coolness which formed the basis of his character, Brian de Bois-Guilbert communicated this hideous intelligence, which was not so calmly received by his astonished comrade.

"Saints of paradise!" said De Bracy; "what is to be done? I vow to Saint Nicholas of Limoges a candlestick of pure gold——"

"Spare thy vow," said the Templar, "and mark me. Lead thy men down, as if to a sally; throw the postern gate open—There are but two men who occupy the float, fling them into the moat, and push across for the barbican. I will sally from the main-gate, and attack the barbican

on the outside; and if we can regain that post, be assured we shall defend ourselves until we are relieved, or at least they grant us fair quarter."

"It is well thought upon," said De Bracy; "I will play my part—Templar, thou wilt not fail me?"

"Hand and glove, I will not!" said Bois-Guilbert. "But haste thee, in the name of God!"

De Bracy hastily drew his men together, and rushed down to the postern gate, which he caused instantly to be thrown open. But scarce was this done ere the portentous strength of the Black Knight forced his way inward in despite of De Bracy and his followers. Two of the foremost instantly fell, and the rest gave way in despite of their leader's efforts to stop them.

"Dogs!" said De Bracy, "will ye let *two* win our only pass for safety?"

"He is the devil!" said a veteran man-at-arms, bearing back from the blows of their sable antagonist.

"And if he be the devil," replied De Bracy, "would you fly from him into the mouth of

hell?—The castle burns behind us, villains!—let despair give you courage, or let me forward, I will cope with this champion myself."

And well and chivalrously did De Bracy that day maintain the fame he had acquired in the civil wars of that dreadful period. The vaulted passage to which the postern gave entrance, and in which these two redoubted champions were now fighting hand to hand, rung with the furious blows which they dealt each other, De Bracy with his sword, the Black Knight with his ponderous axe. At length the Norman received a blow, which, though its force was partly parried by his shield, for otherwise never more would De Bracy have moved limb, descended yet with such violence on his crest, that he measured his length on the paved floor.

"Yield thee, De Bracy," said the Black Champion, stooping over him, and holding against the bars of his helmet the fatal poniard with which the knights dispatched their enemies, (and which was called the dagger of mercy),—"yield thee, Maurice De Bracy, rescue or no rescue, or thou art but a dead man."

"I will not yield," replied De Bracy faintly, "to an unknown conqueror. Tell me thy name, or work thy pleasure on me—it shall never be said that Maurice De Bracy was prisoner to a nameless churl."

The Black Knight whispered something into the ear of the vanquished.

"I yield me to be true prisoner, rescue or no rescue," answered the Norman, exchanging his tone of stern and determined obstinacy for one of the deepest submission.

"Go to the barbican," said the victor, in a tone of authority, "and there wait my further orders."

"Yet first, let me say," said De Bracy, "what it imports thee to know. Wilfrid of Ivanhoe is wounded and a prisoner, and will perish in the burning castle without present help."

"Wilfrid of Ivanhoe!" exclaimed the Black Knight—"prisoner, and perish!—the life of every man in the castle shall answer it if a hair of his head be singed—Shew me his chamber."

"Ascend yonder winding stair—it leads to his apartment—Wilt thou not accept my guidance?"

"No. To the barbican, and there wait my orders. I trust thee not, De Bracy."

During this combat and the brief conversation which ensued, Cedric, at the head of a body of men, among whom the Friar was conspicuous, pushed across the bridge so soon as they saw the postern open, and drove back the dispirited and despairing followers of De Bracy, of whom some asked quarter, some offered vain resistance, and the greater part fled towards the court-yard. De Bracy himself arose from the ground, and cast a sorrowful glance after his conqueror. "He trusts me not," he repeated; "but have I deserved his trust?" He then lifted his sword from the floor, took off his helmet in token of submission, and, going to the barbican, gave up his sword to Locksley, whom he met by the way.

As the fire augmented, symptoms of it became soon apparent in the chamber, where Ivanhoe was watched and tended by the Jewess Rebecca. He had been awakened from his brief slumber by the noise of the battle; and his attendant, who had, at his anxious desire, again placed herself at the

window to watch and report to him the fate of the attack, was for some time prevented from observing either by the increase of the smouldering and stifling vapour. At length the volumes of smoke which rolled into the apartment—the cries for water, which were heard even above the din of the battle, made them sensible of the progress of this new danger.

"The castle burns," said Rebecca; "it burns!—What can we do to save ourselves?"

"Fly, Rebecca, and save thine own life," said Ivanhoe, "for no human aid can avail me."

"I will not fly," said Rebecca, "we will be saved or perish together—And yet, great God!—my father, my father—what will be his fate!"

At this moment the door of the apartment flew open, and the Templar presented himself,—a ghastly figure, for his gilded armour was broken and bloody, and the plume was partly shorn away, partly burnt from his casque. "I have found thee," said he to Rebecca; "thou shalt prove I will keep my word to share weal and woe with thee—There is but one path to safety,

I have cut my way through fifty dangers to point it to thee—up, and instantly follow me."

"Alone," answered Rebecca, "I will not follow thee. If thou wert born of woman—if thou hast but a touch of human charity in thee—if thy heart be not hard as thy breast-plate—save my aged father—save this wounded knight."

"A knight," answered the Templar, with his characteristic calmness, "a knight, Rebecca, must encounter his fate whether it meet him in the shape of sword or flame—and who recks how or where a Jew meets with his?"

"Savage warrior," said Rebecca, "rather will I perish in the flames than accept safety from thee!"

"Thou shalt not chuse, Rebecca—once didst thou foil me, but never mortal did so twice."

So saying, he seized on the terrified maiden, who filled the air with her shrieks, and bore her out of the room in his arms in spite of her cries, and without regarding the menaces and defiance which Ivanhoe thundered against him. "Hound of the Temple—stain to thine Order—set free the damsel! Traitor of Bois-Guilbert, it is Ivanhoe

commands thee!—Villain, I will have thy heart's-blood."

"I had not found thee, Wilfrid," said the Black Knight, who at that instant entered the apartment, "but for thy shouts."

"If thou be'st true knight," said Wilfrid, "think not of me—pursue yon ravisher—save the Lady Rowena—look to the noble Cedric."

"In their turn," answered he of the Fetterlock, "but thine is first."

And seizing upon Ivanhoe, he bore him off with as much ease as the Templar had carried off Rebecca, rushed with him to the postern, and having there delivered his burthen to the care of two yeomen, he again entered the castle to assist in the rescue of the other prisoners.

One turret was now in bright flames, which flashed out furiously from window and shot-hole. But in other parts, the great thickness of the walls and the vaulted roofs of the apartments, resisted the progress of the flames, and there the rage of man still triumphed, as the scarce more dreadful element held mastery elsewhere; for the besiegers pursued the defenders of the castle from

chamber to chamber, and satiated in their blood the vengeance which had long animated them against the soldiers of the tyrant Front-de-Bœuf· Most of the garrison resisted to the uttermost—few of them asked quarter—none received it. The air was filled with groans and clashing of arms—the floors were slippery with the blood of despairing and expiring wretches.

Through this scene of confusion, Cedric rushed in quest of Rowena, while the faithful Gurth, following him closely through the mellay, neglected his own safety while he strove to avert the blows that were aimed at his master. The noble Saxon was so fortunate as to reach his ward's apartment just as she had abandoned all hope of safety, and, with a crucifix clasped in agony to her bosom, sate in expectation of instant death. He committed her to the charge of Gurth, to be conducted in safety to the barbican, the road to which was now cleared of the enemy, and not yet interrupted by the flames. This accomplished, the loyal Cedric hastened in quest of his friend Athelstane, determined at every risk to himself to save that last scion of

Saxon royalty. But ere Cedric penetrated as far as the old hall in which he had himself been a prisoner, the inventive genius of Wamba had procured liberation for himself and his companion in adversity.

When the noise of the conflict announced that it was at the hottest, the Jester began to shout, with the utmost power of his lungs, "Saint George and the dragon!—Bonny Saint George for merry England!—The castle is won!" And these sounds he rendered yet more fearful, by banging against each other two or three pieces of rusty armour which lay scattered around the hall.

A guard, which had been stationed in the outer, or anti-room, and whose spirits were already in a state of alarm, took fright at Wamba's clamour, and, leaving the door open behind them, ran to tell the Templar that foemen had entered the old hall. Meantime the prisoners found no difficulty in making their escape into the anti-room, and from thence into the court of the castle, which was now the last scene of contest.

Here sat the fierce Templar, mounted on horseback, surrounded by several of the garrison both on horse and foot, who had united their strength to that of this renowned leader, in order to secure the last chance of safety and retreat which remained to them. The draw-bridge had been lowered by his orders, but the passage was beset; for the archers, who had hitherto only annoyed the castle on that side by their missiles, no sooner saw the flames breaking out, and the bridge lowered, than they thronged to the entrance, as well to prevent the escape of the garrison, as to secure their own share of booty ere the castle should be burnt down. On the other hand, those of the besiegers who had entered by the postern were now issuing out into the court-yard, and attacking with fury the remnant of the defenders, who were thus attacked on both sides at once.

Animated, however, by despair, and supported by the example of their indomitable leader, the remaining soldiers of the castle fought with the utmost valour; and, being well armed, succeeded more than once in driving back the assailants,

though much inferior in numbers. Rebecca, placed on horseback before one of the Templar's Saracen slaves, was in the midst of the little party; and Bois-Guilbert, notwithstanding the confusion of the bloody fray, shewed every attention to her safety. Repeatedly he was by her side, and, neglecting his own defence, held before her the fence of his triangular steel-plated shield; and anon starting from her side, he cried his war-cry, dashed forward, struck to earth the most forward of the assailants, and was on the same instant once more at her bridle rein.

Athelstane, who, as the reader knows, was slothful, but not cowardly, beheld the female form whom the Templar protected thus sedulously, and doubted not that it was Rowena that the knight was carrying off, in despite of all resistance which could be offered.

"By the soul of Saint Edward," he said, "I will rescue her from yonder over-proud knight, and he shall die by my hand!"

"Think what you do," said Wamba; "the hasty hand catches frog for fish—by my bauble,

yonder is none of my Lady Rowena—see but her long dark locks!—Nay, an ye will not know black from white, ye may be leader, but I will be no follower—no bones of mine shall be broken unless I know for whom.—And you without armour too!—Bethink you, silk bonnet never kept out steel blade—Nay, then, if wilful will to water, wilful must drench.—*Deus vobiscum*, most doughty Athelstane"—he concluded, loosening the hold which he had hitherto kept upon the Saxon's tunic.

To snatch a mace from the pavement, on which it lay beside one whose dying grasp had just relinquished it—to rush on the Templar's band, and to strike in quick succession to the right and left, levelling a warrior at each blow, was, for Athelstane's great strength, now animated with unusual fury, but the work of a single moment; he was soon within two yards of Bois-Guilbert, whom he defied in his loudest tone.

"Turn, false-hearted Templar!—let go her whom thou art unworthy to touch—turn, limb of a band of murdering robbers!"

"Dog!" said the Templar, grinding his teeth, "I will teach thee to blaspheme the holy order of the Temple of Zion;" and with these words, half-wheeling his steed, he made a demi-courbette towards the Saxon, and rising in the stirrups, so as to take full advantage of the descent of the horse, he discharged a fearful blow upon the head of Athelstane.

Well said Wamba, that silken bonnet keeps out no steel blade. So trenchant was the Templar's weapon, that it shore asunder, as it had been a willow twig, the tough and plaited handle of the mace, which the ill-fated Saxon reared to parry the blow, and, descending on his head, levelled him with the earth.

"*Ha! Beau-seant!*" exclaimed Bois-Guilbert, "thus be it to the maligners of the Temple-knights!" Taking advantage of the dismay which was spread by the fall of Athelstane, and calling aloud, "Those who would save themselves, follow me!" he pushed over the draw-bridge, dispersing the archers who would have intercepted them. He was followed by his Saracens, and

some five or six men-at-arms, who had mounted their horses. The Templar's retreat was rendered perilous by the numbers of arrows shot off at him and his party; but this did not prevent him from galloping round to the barbican, of which, according to his previous plan, he supposed it possible De Bracy might have been in possession.

"De Bracy! De Bracy!" he shouted, "art thou there?"

"I am here," replied De Bracy, "but I am a prisoner."

"Can I rescue thee?" cried Bois-Guilbert.

"No," replied De Bracy; "I have rendered me, rescue or no rescue. I will be true prisoner. Save thyself—there are hawks abroad—put the seas betwixt you and England—I dare not say more."

"Well," answered the Templar, "an thou wilt tarry there, remember I have redeemed word and glove. Be the hawks where they will, methinks the walls of the Preceptory of Templestow will be cover sufficient, and thither will I, like heron to her haunt."

Having thus spoken, he galloped off, with his followers.

Those of the castle who had not gotten to horse, still continued to fight desperately against the besiegers, after the departure of the Templar, but rather in despair of quarter than that they entertained any hope of escape. The fire was spreading rapidly through all parts of the castle, when Ulrica, who had first kindled it, appeared on a turret, in the guise of one of the ancient furies, yelling forth a war-song, such as was of yore chaunted on the field of battle by the scalds of the yet heathen Saxons. Her long dishevelled grey hair flew back from her uncovered head; the inebriating delight of gratified vengeance contended in her eyes with the fire of insanity; and she brandished the distaff which she held in her hand, as if she had been one of the Fatal Sisters, who spin and abridge the thread of human life. Tradition has preserved some wild strophes of the barbarous hymn which she chaunted wildly amid that scene of fire and of slaughter :—

1.

Whet the bright steel,
Sons of the White Dragon!
Kindle the torch,
Daughter of Hengist!
The steel glimmers not for the carving of the banquet,
It is hard, broad, and sharply pointed;
The torch goeth not to the bridal chamber,
It steams and glitters blue with sulphur.
Whet the steel, the raven croaks!
Light the torch, Zernebock is yelling!
Whet the steel, sons of the Dragon!
Kindle the torch, daughter of Hengist!

2.

The black cloud is low over the thane's castle;
The eagle screams—he rides on their bosom.
Scream not, grey rider of the sable cloud,
Thy banquet is prepared!
The maidens of Valhalla look forth,
The race of Hengist will send them guests.
Shake your black tresses, maidens of Valhalla!
And strike your loud timbrels for joy!
Many a haughty step bends to your halls,
Many a helmed head.

3.

Dark sits the evening upon the thane's castle,
The black clouds gather round;

Soon shall they be red as the blood of the valiant!
The destroyer of forests shall shake his red crest against
them,
He, the bright consumer of palaces,
Broad waves he his blazing banner,
Red, wide, and dusky,
Over the strife of the valiant:
His joy is in the clashing swords and broken bucklers;
He loves to lick the hissing blood as it bursts warm from
the wound!

4.

All must perish!
The sword cleaveth the helmet;
The strong armour is pierced by the lance;
Fire devoureth the dwelling of princes,
Engines break down the fences of the battle.
All must perish!
The race of Hengist is gone—
The name of Horsa is no more!
Shrink not then from your doom, sons of the sword!
Let your blades drink blood like wine;
Feast ye in the banquet of slaughter,
By the light of the blazing halls!
Strong be your swords while your blood is warm,
And spare neither for pity nor fear,
For vengeance hath but an hour;
Strong hate itself shall expire!
I also must perish.

The towering flames had now surmounted every obstruction, and rose to the evening skies one huge and burning beacon, seen far and wide through the adjacent country. Tower after tower crashed down, with blazing roof and rafter; and the combatants were driven from the court-yard. The vanquished, of whom very few remained, scattered and escaped into the neighbouring wood. The victors, assembling in large bands, gazed with wonder, not unmixed with fear, upon the flames, in which their own ranks and arms glanced dusky red. The maniac figure of the Saxon Ulrica was for a long time visible on the lofty stand she had chosen, tossing her arms abroad with wild exultation, as if she reigned empress of the conflagration which she had raised. At length, with a terrific crash, the whole turret gave way, and she perished in the flames which had consumed her tyrant. An awful pause of horror silenced each murmur of the armed spectators, who, for the space of several minutes, stirred not a finger, save to sign the cross. The voice of Locksley was then heard, "Shout, yeomen!—the den of tyrants is no more! Let each

bring his spoil to our chosen place of rendezvous at the Trysting-tree in the Harthill-walk; for there at break of day will we make just partition among our own bands, together with our worthy allies in this great deed of vengeance."

CHAPTER II.

Trust me each state must have its policies:
Kingdoms have edicts, cities have their charters;
Even the wild outlaw, in his forest-walk,
Keeps yet some touch of civil discipline.
For not since Adam wore his verdant apron,
Hath man with man in social union dwelt,
But laws were made to draw that union closer.

Old Play.

THE day-light had dawned upon the glades of the oak forest. The green boughs glittered with all their pearls of dew. The hind led her fawn from the covert of high fern to the more open walks of the green-wood; and no huntsman was there to watch or intercept the stately hart, as he paced at the head of the antler'd herd.

The outlaws were all assembled around the Trysting-tree in the Harthill-walk, where they

had spent the night in refreshing themselves after the fatigues of the siege, some with wine, some with slumber, many with hearing and recounting the events of the day, and computing the heaps of plunder which their success had placed at the disposal of their Chief.

The spoils were indeed very large; for, notwithstanding that much was consumed, a great deal of plate, rich armour, and splendid clothing, had been secured by the exertions of the dauntless outlaws, who could be appalled by no danger when such rewards were in view. Yet so strict were the laws of their society, that no one ventured to appropriate any part of the booty, which was brought into one common mass to be at the disposal of their leader.

The place of rendezvous was an aged oak; not however the same to which Locksley had conducted Gurth and Wamba in the earlier part of the story, but one which was the centre of a sylvan amphitheatre, within half a mile of the demolished castle of Torquilstone. Here Locksley assumed his seat—a throne of turf erected under the twisted branches of the huge oak, and

his sylvan followers were gathered around him. He assigned to the Black Knight a seat at his right hand, and to Cedric a place upon his left.

"Pardon my freedom, noble sirs," he said, "but in these glades I am monarch—they are my kingdom; and these my wild subjects would reck but little of my power, were I, within my own dominions, to yield place to mortal man.—Now, sirs, who hath seen our chaplain? where is our curtal Friar? A mass amongst Christian men best begins a busy morning."—No one had seen the Clerk of Copmanhurst.—"Over gods forebode," said the outlaw Chief, "I trust the jolly priest hath but abidden by the wine-pot a thought too late. Who saw him since the castle was ta'en?"

"I," quoth the Miller, "marked him busy about the door of a cellar, swearing by each saint in the calendar he would taste the smack of Front-de-Bœuf's Gascogne wine."

"Now, the saints, as many as there be of them," said the Captain, "forefend, lest he has drunk too deep of the wine-butts, and perished by the fall of the castle!—Away, Miller!—Take with you

enow of men, seek the place where you last saw him—throw water from the moat on the scorching ruins—I will have them removed stone by stone ere I lose my curtal Friar."

The numbers who hastened to execute this duty, considering that an interesting division of spoil was about to take place, showed how much the troop had at heart the safety of their spiritual father.

"Meanwhile, let us proceed," said Locksley; "for when this bold deed shall be sounded abroad, the bands of De Bracy, of Malvoisin, and other allies of Front-de-Bœuf, will be in motion against us, and it were well that we proceed in time for our safety.—Noble Cedric," he said, turning to the Saxon, "that spoil is divided into two portions; do thou make choice of that best suits thee, to recompence thy people who were partakers with us in this adventure."

"Good yeoman," said Cedric, "my heart is oppressed with sadness. The noble Athelstane of Conningsburgh is no more—the last sprout of the sainted Confessor! Hopes have perished with him which can never return!—A sparkle

hath been quenched by his blood, which no human breath can again rekindle! My people, save the few who are now with me, do but tarry my presence to transport his honoured remains to their last mansion. The Lady Rowena is desirous to return to Rotherwood, and must be escorted by a sufficient force. I should, therefore, ere now, have left this place; and I waited—not to share the booty, for, so help me God and Saint Withold! as neither I nor any of mine will touch the value of a liard,—I waited but to render my thanks to thee and to thy bold yeomen, for the life and honour ye have saved."

"Nay, but," said the chief Outlaw, "we did but half the work at most—take of the spoil what may reward your own neighbours and followers."

"I am rich enough to reward them from mine own wealth," answered Cedric.

"And some," said Wamba, "have been wise enough to reward themselves; they do not march off empty-handed altogether. We do not all wear motley."

"They are welcome," said Locksley; "our laws bind but ourselves."

"But thou, my poor knave," said Cedric, turning about and embracing his Jester, "how shall I reward thee, who feared not to give thy body to chains and death instead of mine!—All forsook me, when the poor fool was faithful!"

A tear stood in the eye of the rough Thane as he spoke—a mark of feeling which even the death of Athelstane had not extracted; but there was something in the half-instinctive attachment of his clown, that waked his nature more keenly than even grief itself.

"Nay," said the Jester, extricating himself from his master's caress, "if you pay my service with the water of your eye, the Jester must weep for company, and then what becomes of his vocation?—But, uncle, if you would indeed pleasure me, I pray you to pardon my playfellow Gurth, who stole a week from your service to bestow it on your son."

"Pardon him!" exclaimed Cedric; "I will both pardon and reward him.—Kneel down,

Gurth."—The swine-herd was in an instant at his master's feet.—"THEOW and ESNE art thou no longer," said Cedric, touching him with a wand; "FOLK-FREE and SACLESS art thou in town and from town, in the forest as in the field. A hyde of land I give to thee in my steads of Walbrugham, from me and mine to thee and thine aye and for ever; and God's malison on his head who this gainsays!"

No longer a serf, but a freeman and a land-holder, Gurth sprung upon his feet, and twice bounded aloft to almost his own height from the ground.

"A smith and a file," he cried, "to do away the collar from the neck of a freeman!—Noble master! doubled is my strength by your gift, and doubly will I fight for you!—There is a free spirit in my breast—I am a man changed to myself and all around.—Ha, Fangs!" he continued,—for that faithful cur, seeing his master thus transported, began to jump upon him, to express his sympathy,—"knowest thou thy master still?"

"Ay," said Wamba, "Fangs and I still know thee, Gurth, though we must needs abide

by the collar; it is only thou who art likely to forget both us and thyself."

"I shall forget myself indeed ere I forget thee, true comrade," said Gurth; "and were freedom fit for thee, Wamba, the master would not let thee want it."

"Nay," said Wamba, "never think I envy thee, brother Gurth; the serf sits by the hall-fire when the freeman must forth to the field—And what saith Oldhelm of Malmsbury—Better a fool at a feast than a wise man at a fray."

The tramp of horses was now heard, and the Lady Rowena appeared, surrounded by several riders, and a much stronger party of footmen, who joyfully shook their pikes and clashed their brown-bills for joy of her freedom. She herself, richly attired, and mounted on a dark chesnut palfrey, had recovered all the dignity of her manner, and only an unwonted degree of paleness shewed the sufferings she had undergone. Her lovely brow, though sorrowful, bore on it a cast of reviving hope referring to the future, as well as of grateful thankfulness for the past deliverance —She knew that Ivanhoe was safe, and she knew

that Athelstane was dead. The former assurance filled her with the most sincere delight; and if she did not rejoice at the other, she might be pardoned for feeling the full advantage of being freed from further persecution on the only subject in which she had ever been contradicted by her guardian Cedric.

As Rowena bent her steed toward Locksley's seat, that bold yeoman, with all his followers, rose to receive her as if by a general instinct of courtesy. The blood rose to her cheeks, as, courteously waving her hand, and bending so low that her beautiful and loose tresses were for an instant mixed with the flowing mane of her palfrey, she expressed in few but apt words her obligations and her gratitude to Locksley and her other deliverers.—"God bless you, brave men," she concluded, "God and Our Lady bless you and requite you for gallantly periling yourselves in the cause of the oppressed!—If any of you should hunger, remember Rowena has food—if you should thirst, she has many a butt of wine and brown ale—and if the Normans drive ye from these walks, Rowena has forests of her

own, where her gallant deliverers may range at full freedom."

"Thanks, gentle lady," said Locksley; "thanks from my company and myself. But, to have saved you requites itself. We who walk the greenwood do many a wild deed, and the Lady Rowena's deliverance may be received as an atonement."

Again bowing from her palfrey, Rowena turned to depart; but, pausing a moment, while Cedric, who was to attend her, was also taking his leave, she found herself unexpectedly close by the prisoner De Bracy. He stood under a tree in deep meditation, his arms crossed upon his breast, and Rowena was in hopes she might pass him unobserved. He looked up, however, and, when aware of her presence, a deep flush of shame suffused his handsome countenance. He stood a moment most irresolute; then, stepping forward, took her palfrey by the rein, and bent his knee before her.

"Will the Lady Rowena deign to cast an eye on a captive knight—on a dishonoured soldier?"

"Sir Knight," answered Rowena, "in enterprizes such as yours, the real dishonour lies not in failure, but in success."

"Conquest, lady, should soften the heart," answered De Bracy; "let me but know that the Lady Rowena forgives the violence occasioned by an ill-fated passion, and she shall soon learn that De Bracy knows how to serve her in nobler ways."

"I forgive you, Sir Knight, but it is as a Christian."

"That means," said Wamba, "that she does not forgive him at all."

"But I can never forgive the misery and desolation your madness has occasioned," continued Rowena.

"Unloose your hold on the lady's rein," said Cedric, coming up. "By the bright sun above us, but it were shame, I would pin thee to the earth with my javelin—but be well assured, thou shalt smart, Maurice De Bracy, for thy share in this foul deed."

"He threatens safely who threatens a prisoner," said De Bracy; "but when had a Saxon any touch of courtesy?"

Then retiring two steps backward, he permitted the lady to move on.

Cedric, ere they departed, expressed his peculiar gratitude to the Black Champion, and earnestly entreated him to accompany him to Rotherwood.

"I know," he said, "that ye errant knights desire to carry your fortunes on the point of your lance, and reck not of land or goods; but war is a changeful mistress, and a home is sometimes desirable even to the champion whose trade is wandering. Thou hast earned one in the halls of Rotherwood, noble knight. Cedric has wealth enough to repair the injuries of fortune, and all he has is his deliverer's—Come, therefore, to Rotherwood, not as a guest, but as a son or brother."

"Cedric has already made me rich," said the Knight,—"he has taught me the value of Saxon virtue. To Rotherwood will I come, brave Saxon, and that speedily; but, as now, pressing matters of moment detain me from your halls. Peradventure when I come hither, I will ask such a boon as will put even thy generosity to the test."

"It is granted ere spoken out," said Cedric, striking his ready palm into the gauntletted palm

of the Black Knight,—" it is granted already, were it to affect half my fortune."

" Gage not thy promise so lightly," said the Knight of the Fetterlock ; " yet well I hope to gain the boon I shall ask—meanwhile adieu."

" I have but to say," added the Saxon, " that, during the funeral rites of the noble Athelstane, I shall be an inhabitant of the halls of his castle of Conningsburgh—They will be open to all who chuse to partake of the funeral banquetting ; and I speak in name of the noble Edith, mother of the fallen prince—they will never be shut against him who laboured so bravely, though unsuccessfully, to save Athelstane from Norman chains and Norman steel."

" Ay, ay," said Wamba, who had resumed his attendance on his master, " rare feeding there will be—pity that the noble Athelstane cannot banquet at his own funeral.—But he," continued the Jester, lifting up his eyes gravely, " is supping in Paradise, and doubtless does honour to the cheer."

" Peace, and move on," said Cedric, his anger at this untimely jest being checked by the re-

collection of Wamba's recent services. Rowena waved a graceful adieu to him of the Fetterlock—the Saxon bad God speed him, and on they moved through a wide glade of the forest.

They had scarce departed, ere a sudden procession moved from under the greenwood branches, swept slowly round the sylvan amphitheatre, and took the same direction with Rowena and her followers. The priests of a neighbouring convent, in expectation of the ample donation, or *soul-scat*, which Cedric had propined, attended upon the car in which the body of Athelstane was laid, and sang hymns as it was sadly and slowly borne on the shoulders of his vassals to his castle of Coningsburgh, to be there deposited in the grave of Hengist, from whom the deceased derived his long descent. Many of his vassals had assembled at the news of his death, and followed the bier with all the external marks, at least, of dejection and sorrow. Again the outlaws arose, and paid the same rude and spontaneous homage to death, which they had so lately rendered to beauty—the slow chaunt and mournful step of the priests, brought back to their remembrance such of their

comrades as had fallen in the yesterday's affray. But such recollections dwell not long with those who lead a life of danger and enterprize, and ere the sound of the death-hymn had died on the wind, the outlaws were again busied in the distribution of their spoil.

"Valiant knight," said Locksley to the Black Champion, "without whose good heart and mighty arm our enterprize must altogether have failed, will it please you to take from that mass of spoil whatsoever may best serve to pleasure you, and to remind you of this my Trysting-tree?"

"I accept the offer," said the Knight, "as frankly as it is given; and I ask permission to dispose of Sir Maurice de Bracy at my own pleasure."

"He is thine already," said Locksley; "and well for him! else the tyrant had graced the highest bough of this oak, with as many of his Free Companions as we could gather, hanging thick as acorns around him.—But he is thy prisoner, and he is safe, though he had slain my father."

"Bracy," said the Knight, "thou art free—depart. He whose prisoner thou art scorns to take mean revenge for what is passed. But beware of the future, lest a worse thing befal thee—Maurice de Bracy, I say beware!"

De Bracy bowed low and in silence, and was about to withdraw, when the yeomen burst at once into a shout of execration and derision. The proud knight instantly stopped, turned back, folded his arms, drew up his form to its full height, and exclaimed, "Peace, ye yelping curs! who open upon a cry which ye followed not when the stag was at bay—De Bracy scorns your censure as he would disdain your applause. To your brakes and caves, ye outlawed thieves! and be silent when aught knightly or noble is but spoken within a league of your fox-earths."

This ill-timed defiance might have procured for De Bracy a volley of arrows, but for the hasty interference of the outlaw Chief. Meanwhile the knight caught a horse by the rein, for several which had been taken in the stables of Front-de-Bœuf stood accoutred around, and were a va-

luable part of the booty. He threw himself upon the saddle, and galloped off through the wood.

When the bustle occasioned by this incident was somewhat composed, the chief Outlaw took from his neck the rich horn and baldric which he had recently gained at the strife of archery near Ashby.

"Noble knight," he said to him of the Fetterlock, "if you disdain not to grace by your acceptance a bugle which I have once worn, this I will pray you to keep as a memorial of your gallant bearing—and if ye have aught to do, and as happeneth oft to a gallant knight, ye chance to be hard bestad in any forest between Trent and Tees, wind three mots* upon the horn thus, *Wa-sa-hoa!* and it may well chance ye shall find helpers and rescue."

He then gave breath to the bugle, and winded once and again the call which he described, until the knight had caught the notes.

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* The notes upon the bugle were anciently called mots, and are distinguished in the old treatises on hunting, not by musical characters, but by written words.

"Gramercy for the gift, bold yeoman," said the knight; "and better help than thine and thy rangers would I never seek, were it at my utmost need." And then in his turn he winded the call till all the greenwood rang.

"Well blown and clearly," said the yeoman; "beshrew me an thou knowest not as much of woodcraft as of war!—thou hast been a striker of deer in thy day, I warrant.—Comrades, mark these three mots—it is the call of the Knight of the Fetterlock; and he who hears it, and hastens not to serve him at his need, I will have him scourged out of our band with his own bow-string."

"Long live our leader!" shouted the yeomen, "and long live the Black Knight of the Fetter-lock!—May he soon use our service, to prove how readily it will be paid."

Locksley now proceeded to the distribution of the spoil, which he performed with the most laudable impartiality. A tenth part of the whole was set apart for the church, and for pious uses; a portion was next allotted to a sort of public treasury; a part was assigned to the widows and

children of those who had fallen, or to be expended in masses for the souls of such as had left no surviving family. The rest was divided amongst the outlaws, according to their rank and merit; and the judgment of the Chief, on all such doubtful questions as occurred, was delivered with great shrewdness, and received with absolute submission. The Black Knight was not a little surprised to find that men, in a state so lawless, were nevertheless among themselves so regularly and equitably governed, and all that he observed added to his opinion of the justice and judgment of their leader.

When each had taken his own proportion of the booty, and while the treasurer, accompanied by four tall yeomen, was transporting that belonging to the state to some place of concealment or of security, the portion devoted to the church still remained unappropriated.

"I would," said the leader, "we could hear tidings of our joyous chaplain—he was never wont to be absent when meat was to be blessed, or spoil to be parted; and it is his duty to take care of these the tithes of our successful enter-

prize. Also, I have a holy brother of his a prisoner at no great distance, and I would have the Friar to help me to deal with him in due sort—I greatly misdoubt the safety of the bluff priest."

"I were right sorry for that," said the Knight of the Fetterlock, "for I stand indebted to him for the joyous hospitality of a merry night in his cell. Let us to the ruins of the castle; it may be we shall there learn some tidings of him."

While they thus spoke, a loud shout among the yeomen announced the arrival of him for whom they feared, as they learned from the stentorian voice of the Friar himself, long before they saw his burley person.

"Make room, my merry men!" he exclaimed; "room for your godly father and his prisoner—Cry welcome once more.—I come, noble leader, like an eagle, with my prey in my clutch."—And making his way through the ring, amidst the laughter of all around, he appeared in majestic triumph, his huge partizan in one hand, and in the other a halter, one end of which was fastened to the neck of the unfortunate Isaac of York, who, bent down by sorrow and terror, was drag-

ged on by the victorious priest.—"Where is Allen-a-Dale, to chronicle me in a ballad or a lay?—By Saint Hermangild, the jingling crowder is ever out of the way when there is an apt theme for exalting valour!"

"Curtal Priest," said the Captain, "thou hast been at a wet mass this morning, as early as it is. In the name of Saint Nicholas, whom hast thou got here?"

"A captive to my sword and to my lance, noble Captain," replied the Clerk of Copmanhurst; "to my bow and to my halbert, I should rather say; and yet I have redeemed him by my divinity from a worse captivity. Speak, Jew,—have I not ransomed thee from Sathanas?—have I not taught thee thy creed, thy *pater*, and thine *Ave Maria*!—Did I not spend the whole night in drinking to thee, and in expounding of mysteries?"

"For the love of God!" ejaculated the poor Jew; "will no one take me out of the keeping of this mad—I mean this holy man?"

"How's this, Jew?" said the Friar, with a menacing aspect; "dost thou recant, Jew?—

Bethink thee, if thou dost relapse into thine infidelity, though thou art not so tender as a sucking pig—I would I had one to break my fast upon—thou art not too tough to be roasted! Be conformable, Isaac, and repeat the words after me. *Ave Maria!*——"

"Nay, we will have no profanation, mad priest," said Locksley; "let us rather hear where you found this prisoner of thine."

"By Saint Dunstan," said the Friar, "I found him where I sought for better ware. I did step into the cellarage to see what might be rescued there; for though a cup of burnt wine, with spice, be an evening's draught for an Emperor, it were waste, methought, to let so much good liquor be mulled at once; and I had caught up one runlet of sack, and was coming to call more aid among these lazy knaves, who are ever to seek when a good deed is to be done, when I was advised of a strong door—Aha! thought I, here is the choicest juice of all in this secret crypt; and the knave butler, being disturbed in his vocation, hath left the key in the door—In therefore I went, and found just nought,

besides a commodity of rusted chains and this dog of a Jew, who presently rendered himself my prisoner, rescue or no rescue. I did but refresh myself, after the fatigue of the action, with the unbeliever, with one humming cup of sack, and was proceeding to lead forth my captive, when, crash after crash, as with wild thunder-dint and levin-fire, down toppled the masonry of an outer tower, (marry beshrew their hands that built it not the firmer!) and blocked up the passage. The roar of one falling tower followed another—I gave up thought of life; and deeming it a dishonour to one of my profession to pass out of this world in company with a Jew, I heaved up my halbert to beat his brains out; but I took pity on his grey hairs, and deemed it better to lay down the partizan, and take up my spiritual weapons for his conversion. And truly, by the blessing of Saint Dunstan, the seed has been sown in good soil; only that, with speaking to him of mysteries through the whole night (for the few draughts of sack which I sharpened my wits with were not worth marking) my head is well nigh dizzied, I trow.—But I was clean exhausted

—Gilbert and Wibbald know in what state they found me—quite and clean exhausted."

"We can bear witness," said Gilbert; "for when we had cleared away the ruin, and by Saint Dunstan's help lighted upon the dungeon stair, we found the runlet of sack half empty, the Jew half dead, and the Friar more than half exhausted, as he calls it."

"Ye be knaves! ye lie!" retorted the offended Friar; "it was you and your gormandizing companions that drank up the sack, and called it your morning draught—I am a pagan, an I kept it not for the Captain's own throat. But what recks it? The Jew is converted, and understands all I have told him, very nearly, if not altogether, as well as myself."

"Jew," said the Captain, "is this true? hast thou renounced thine unbelief?"

"May I so find mercy in your eyes," said the Jew, "as I know not one word which the reverend prelate spake to me all this fearful night. Alas! I was so distraught with agony, and fear, and grief, that had our holy father Abraham come to preach to me, he had found but a deaf listener."

"Thou liest, Jew, and thou knowest thou dost," said the Friar; "I will remind thee but of one word of our conference—thou didst promise to give all thy substance to our holy Order."

"So help me the promise, fair sirs," said Isaac, more alarmed than even before, "as no such sounds ever crossed my lips! Alas! I am an aged beggar'd man—I fear me a childless—have ruth on me, and let me go!"

"Nay," said the Friar, "if thou dost retract vows made in favour of holy Church, thou must do penance."

Accordingly he raised his halbert, and would have laid the staff of it lustily on the Jew's shoulders, had not the Black Knight stopped the blow, and thereby transferred the Holy Clerk's resentment to himself.

"By Saint Thomas of Kent," said he, "an I buckle to my gear, I will teach thee to mell with thine own matters, maugre thine iron case there."

"Nay, be not wroth with me," said the knight; thou knowest I am thy sworn friend and comrade."

"I know no such thing," answered the Friar, "and defy thee for a meddling cocks-comb."

"Nay, but," said the knight, who seemed to take a pleasure in provoking his quondam host, "hast thou forgotten how, that for my sake, (for I say nothing of the temptation of the flagon and the pasty,) thou didst break thy vow of fast and vigil?"

"Truly, friend," said the Friar, clenching his huge fist, "I will bestow a buffet on thee."

"I accept of no such presents," said the knight; "I will repay thee with usury as deep as ever thy prisoner there exacted in his traffic."

"I will prove that presently," said the Friar.

"Hola!" cried the Captain, "what art thou after, mad Friar? brawling beneath our Trysting-tree?"

"No brawling," said the knight, "it is but a friendly interchange of courtesy. Friar, strike an thou darest—I will stand thy blow, if thou wilt stand mine."

"Thou hast the advantage with that iron-pot on thy head," said the churchman; "but have

at thee—Down thou goest an thou wert Goliath of Gath in his brazen helmet."

The Friar bared his brawny arm up to the elbow, and giving his full strength to the blow, gave the knight a buffet that might have felled an ox. But his adversary stood firm as a rock. A loud shout was uttered by all the yeomen around.

"Now, Priest," said the knight, pulling off his gauntlet, "if I had vantage on my head, I will have none on my hand—stand fast as a true man."

"*Genam meam dedi vapulatori*—I have given my cheek to the smiter," said the Priest; "an thou canst stir me from the spot, fellow, I will give thee the Jew's ransom."

So spoke the burley Priest, assuming, on his part, high defiance. But who may resist his fate? The buffet of the knight was given with such strength and good will, that the Friar rolled hea over heels upon the plain, to the great amazement of all the spectators. But he arose neither angry nor crest-fallen.

"Brother," said he to the knight, "thou

should'st have used thy strength with more discretion. I had mumbled but a lame mass an thou hadst broken my jaw, for the piper plays ill that wants the nether chops. Nevertheless, there is my hand, in friendly witness that I will exchange no more cuffs with thee, having been a loser by the barter. End now all unkindness. Let us put the Jew to ransom, since the leopard will not change his spots, and a Jew he will continue to be."

"The Priest," said Clement, "is not half so confident of the Jew's conversion, since he received that buffet on the ear."

"Go to, knave, what pratest thou of conversions?—what, is there no respect?—all masters, and no men?—I tell thee, fellow, I was somewhat totty when I received the good knight's blow, or I had kept my ground under it. But an thou gibest more of it, thou shalt learn I can give as well as take."

"Peace all!" said the Captain.—"And thou, Jew, think of thy ransom; thou needest not to be told that thy race are held to be accursed in all Christian communities, and trust me that we

cannot endure thy presence amongst us. Think, therefore, of an offer, while I examine a prisoner of another cast."

"Were many of Front-de-Bœuf's men taken?" demanded the Black Knight.

"None of note enough to be put to ransom," answered the Captain; "a set of hilding fellows there were, whom we dismissed to find them a new master—enough had been done for revenge and profit; the bunch of them were not worth à cardecu. The prisoner I speak of is better booty—a jolly monk riding to visit his leman, an I may judge by his horse-gear and wearing apparel.—Here cometh the worthy prelate, as pert as a pyet." And, between two yeomen, was brought before the sylvan throne of the outlaw Chief, our old friend, Prior Aymer of Jorvaulx.

CHAPTER III.

—— Flower of warriors,
How is't with Titus Lartius?
Marcius. As with a man busied about decrees,
Condemning some to death and some to exile,
Ransoming him or pitying, threatening the other.
Coriolanus.

The captive Abbot's features and manners exhibited a whimsical mixture of offended pride, and deranged foppery and bodily terror.

"Why, how now, my masters?" said he, with a voice in which all three emotions were blended. "What order is this among ye? Be ye Turks or Christians, that handle a churchman?—Know ye what it is, *manus imponere in servos Domini?* Ye have plundered my mails—torn my cope of curious cut lace, which might have served a cardinal—Another in my place would have been at his *excommunicabo vos;* but I am placable, and if ye order forth my palfreys, release my brethren,

and restore my mails, send with all speed an hundred crowns to be expended in masses at the high altar of Jorvaulx Abbey, and make your vow to eat no venison until next Pentecost, it may be you shall hear little more of this mad frolic."

"Holy Father," said the chief Outlaw, "it grieves me to think that you have met with such usage from any of my followers, as calls for your fatherly reprehension."

"Usage!" echoed the priest, encouraged by the mild tone of the sylvan leader; "it were usage fit for no hound of good race—much less for a Christian—far less for a priest—and least of all for the Prior of the holy community of Jorvaulx. Here is a profane and drunken minstrel, called Allan-a-Dale—*nebulo quidam*—who has menaced me with corporeal punishment—nay, with death itself, an I pay not down four hundred crowns of ransom, to the boot all the treasure of which he hath robbed me—gold chains and gymmal rings to an unknown value; besides what is broken and spoiled among their rude

hands, as my pouncet-box and silver crisping-tongs."

"It is impossible that Allan-a-Dale can have thus treated a man of your reverend bearing," replied the Captain.

"It is true as the gospel of Saint Nicodemus," said the Prior; "he swore, with many a cruel north country oath, that he would hang me up on the highest tree in the greenwood."

"Did he so in very deed? Nay, then, reverend father, I think you had better comply with his demands—for Allan-a-Dale is the very man to abide by his word when he has so pledged it."

"You do but jest with me," said the astounded Prior, with a forced laugh; "and I love a good jest with all my heart. But, ha! ha! ha! when the mirth has lasted the live-long night, it is time to be grave in the morning."

"And I am as grave as a father confessor," replied the Outlaw; "you must pay a round ransom, Sir Prior, or your convent is likely to be called to a new election; for your place will know you no more."

"Are ye Christians," said the Prior, "and hold this language to a churchman?"

"Christians! aye, marry are we, and have divinity among us to boot," answered the Outlaw. "Let our buxom chaplain stand forth, and expound to this reverend father the texts which concern this matter."

The Friar, half-drunk, half-sober, had huddled a friar's frock over his green cassock, and now summoning together whatever scraps of learning he had learned by rote in former days, "Holy father," said he, "*Deus faciet salvum benignitatem vestrum*—You are welcome to the greenwood."

"What profane mummery is this?" said the Prior; "Friend, if thou be'st indeed of the church, it were a better deed to shew me how I may escape from these men's hands, than to stand ducking and grinning here like a morris-dancer."

"Truly, reverend father," said the Friar, "I know but one mode in which thou may'st escape. This is Saint Andrew's day with us, we are taking our tythes."

"But not of the church then, I trust, my good brother," said the Prior.

"Of church and lay," said the Friar; "and therefore, Sir Prior, *facite vobis amicos de Mammone iniquitatis*—make yourselves friends of the Mammon of iniquity, for no other friendship is like to serve your turn."

"I love a jolly woodsman at heart," said the Prior; "come, ye must not deal too hard with me—I can well of woodcraft, and can wind a horn clear and lustily, and hollo till every oak rings again—Come, ye must not deal too hard with me."

"Give him a horn," said the Outlaw, "we will prove the skill he boasts of."

The Prior Aymer winded a blast accordingly. The Captain shook his head.

"Sir Prior," he said, "this may not ransom thee—we cannot afford, as the legend on a good knight's shield hath it, to set thee free for a blast. Moreover, I have found thee—thou art one of those, who, with new French graces and Tra-li-ras, dost disturb the ancient English bugle notes. —Prior, that last flourish on the recheat hath

added fifty crowns to thy ransom, for corrupting the true old manly blasts of venerie."

"Well, friend," said the Abbot, peevishly, "thou art ill to please with thy woodcraft. I pray thee be more conformable in this matter of my ransom. At a word—since I must needs, for once, hold a candle to the devil—what ransom am I to pay for walking on Watling-street, without having fifty men at my back?"

"Were it not well," said the Lieutenant of the gang apart to the Captain, "that the Prior should name the Jew's ransom, and the Jew name the Prior's."

"Thou art a mad knave," said the Captain, "but thy plan transcends!—Here, Jew, step forth—Look at that holy Father Aymer, Prior of the rich Abbey of Jorvaulx, and tell us at what ransom we should hold him?—Thou knowest the income of his convent, I warrant thee."

"O, assuredly," said Isaac. "I have trafficked with the good fathers, and bought wheat and barley, and fruits of the earth, and also much wool. O, it is a rich abbey-stede, and they do

live upon the fat, and drink the sweet wines upon the lees, these good fathers of Jorvaulx. Ah, if an out-cast like me had such a home to go to, and such incomings by the year and by the month, I would pay much gold and silver to redeem my captivity."

"Hound of a Jew!" exclaimed the Prior, "no one knows better than thy own cursed self, that our holy house of God is indebted for the finishing of our chancel——"

"And for the storing of your cellars in the last season with the due allowance of Gascon wine," interrupted the Jew; "but that—that is small matters."

"Hear the infidel dog!—he jangles as if our holy community did come under debts for the wines we have a license to drink, *propter necessitatem et ad frigus depellendum.* The circumcised villain blasphemeth the holy church, and Christian men listen and rebuke him not!"

"All this helps nothing," said the leader.—"Isaac, pronounce what he may pay, without flaying both hide and hair."

"An six hundred crowns," said Isaac, "the good Prior might well pay to your honoured valours, and never sit less soft in his stall."

"Six hundred crowns," said the leader, gravely; "I am contented—thou hast well spoken, Isaac—six hundred crowns—it is a sentence, Sir Prior."

"A sentence!—a sentence!" exclaimed the band; "Solomon had not done it better."

"Thou hearest thy doom, Prior," said the leader.

"Ye are mad, my masters," said the Prior; "where am I to find such a sum? If I sell the very pyx and candlesticks on the altar at Jorvaulx, I shall scarce raise the half; and it will be necessary for that purpose that I go to Jorvaulx myself; ye may retain as borrows* my two priests."

"That will be but blind trust," said the Outlaw; "we will retain thee, Prior, and send them

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* Borghs or borrows signifies pledges. Hence our word to borrow, because we pledge ourselves to restore what is lent.

to fetch thy ransom. Thou shalt not want a cup of wine and a collop of venison the while; and if thou lovest woodcraft, thou shalt see such as your north country never witnessed."

"Or, if so please you," said Isaac, willing to curry favour with the outlaws, "I can send to York for the six hundred crowns, out of certain monies in my hands, if so be that the most reverend Prior present will grant me a quittance."

"He shall grant thee whatever thou dost list, Isaac," said the Captain; "and thou shalt lay down the redemption money for Prior Aymer as for thyself."

"For myself! ah, courageous sirs," said the Jew," "I am a broken and impoverished man; a beggar's staff must be my portion through life, supposing I were to pay you fifty crowns."

"The Prior shall judge of that matter," replied the Captain; "how say you, father Aymer?—Can the Jew afford a good ransom?"

"Can he afford a ransom?" answered the Prior—"Is he not Isaac of York, rich enough to redeem the captivity of the ten tribes of Israel, who were led into Assyrian bondage?—I have

seen but little of him myself, but our cellarer and treasurer have dealt largely with him, and report says that his house at York is so full of gold and silver as is a shame in any Christian land. Marvel it is to all living Christian hearts that such gnawing adders should be suffered to eat into the bowels of the state, and even of the holy church herself, with foul usuries and extortions."

"Hold, father," said the Jew, "mitigate and assuage your choler. I pray of your reverence to remember that I force my monies upon no one. But when churchman and layman, prince and prior, knight and priest, come knocking to Isaac's door, they borrow not his shekels with these uncivil terms. It is then, Friend Isaac, will you pleasure us in this matter, and our day shall be truly kept, so God sa' me?—and kind Isaac, if ever you served man, shew yourself a friend in this need. And when the day comes, and I ask my own, then what hear I but damned Jew, and the curse of Egypt on your tribe, and all that may stir up the rude and uncivil populace against poor strangers?"

"Prior," said the Captain, "Jew though he

be, he hath in this spoken well. Do thou, therefore, name his ransom, as he named thine, without farther rude terms."

"None but *latro famosus*—the interpretation whereof," said the Prior, "will I give at some other time and tide—would place a Christian prelate and an unbaptized Jew upon the same bench. But since ye require me to put a price upon this caitiff, I tell you openly that ye will wrong yourselves if you take from him a penny under a thousand crowns."

"A sentence!—a sentence!" said the chief Outlaw.

"A sentence!—a sentence!" shouted his assessors; "the Christian has shewn his good nurture, and dealt with us more generously than the Jew."

"The God of my fathers help me!" said the Jew; "will ye bear to the ground an impoverished creature?—I am this day childless, and will ye deprive me of the means of livelihood?"

"Thou wilt have the less to provide for, Jew, if thou art childless," said Aymer.

"Alas! my lord," said Isaac, "your law per-

mits you not to know how the child of our bosom is entwined with the strings of our heart—O Rebecca! daughter of my beloved Rachel! were each leaf on that tree a zecchin, and each zecchin mine own, all that mass of wealth would I give to know whether thou art alive, and escaped the hands of the Nazarene!"

"Was not thy daughter dark-haired?" said one of the outlaws; "and wore she not a veil of twisted sendal, broidered with silver?"

"She did!—she did!" said the old man, trembling with eagerness, as formerly with fear. "The blessing of Jacob be upon thee! canst thou tell me aught of her safety?"

"It was she, then," said the yeoman, "who was carried off by the proud Templar, when he broke through our ranks on yester-even. I had drawn my bow to send a shaft after him, but spared him even for the sake of the damsel, who I feared might take harm from the arrow."

"Oh!" answered the Jew, "I would to God thou hadst shot, though the arrow had pierced her bosom—better the tomb of her fathers than

the dishonourable couch of the licentious and savage Templar. Ichobad! Ichobad! the glory hath departed from my house."

"Friends," said the Chief, looking round, "the old man is but a Jew, natheless his grief touches me.—Deal uprightly with us, Isaac—will paying this ransom of a thousand crowns leave thee altogether pennyless?"

Isaac, recalled to think of his worldly goods, the love of which, by dint of inveterate habit, contended even with his parental affection, grew pale, stammered, and could not deny there might be some small surplus.

"Well—go to—what though there be," said the Outlaw, "we will not reckon with thee too closely. Without treasure thou may'st as well hope to redeem thy child from the clutches of Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert, as to shoot a stag-royal with a headless shaft—We will take thee at the same ransom with Prior Aymer, or rather at one hundred crowns lower, which hundred crowns shall be mine own peculiar loss; and so we shall avoid the heinous offence of rating a

Jew merchant as high as a Christian prelate, and thou wilt have four hundred crowns remaining to treat for thy daughter's ransom. Templars love the glitter of silver shekels as well as the sparkle of black eyes—Hasten to make thy crowns chink in the ear of De Bois-Guilbert, ere worse comes of it. Thou wilt find him, as our scouts have brought notice, at the next Preceptory house of his Order.—Said I well, my merry mates?"

The yeomen expressed their wonted acquiescence in their leader's opinion; and Isaac, relieved of one half of his apprehensions, by learning that his daughter lived, and might possibly be ransomed, threw himself at the feet of the generous Outlaw, and, rubbing his beard against his buskins, sought to kiss the hem of his green cassock. The Captain drew himself back, and extricated himself from the Jew's grasp, not without some marks of contempt.

"Nay, beshrew thee, man, up with thee! I am English-born, and love no such eastern prostrations—Kneel to God, and not to a poor sinner like me."

"Ay, Jew," said Prior Aymer; "kneel to God, as represented in the servant of his altar, and who knows, with thy sincere repentance and due gifts to the shrine of Saint Robert, what grace thou mayst acquire for thyself and thy daughter Rebecca? I grieve for the maiden, for she is of fair and comely countenance, I beheld her in the lists at Ashby. Also Brian de Bois-Guilbert is one with whom I may do much —bethink thee how thou mayest deserve my good word with him."

"Alas! alas!" said the Jew, "on every hand the spoilers arise against me—I am given as a prey unto the Assyrian, and a prey unto him of Egypt."

"And what else should be the lot of thy accursed race?" answered the Prior; "for what saith holy writ, *verbum Domini projecerunt, et sapientia est nulla in eis*—they have cast forth the word of the Lord, and there is no wisdom in them; *propterea dabo mulieres eorum exteris*—I will give their women to strangers, that is to the Templar, as in the present matter; *et thesauros eorum hæredibus alienis*, and their treasures to others."

Isaac groaned deeply, and began to wring his hands and to relapse into his state of desolation and despair. But the leader of the yeomen led him aside.

"Advise thee well, Isaac, what thou wilt do in this matter; my counsel to thee is to make a friend of this churchman. He is vain, Isaac, and he is covetous, at least he needs money to supply his profusion. Thou canst easily gratify his greed; for think not that I am blinded by thy pretexts of poverty. I know, Isaac, the very iron chest in which thou dost keep thy money-bags—What, know I not the great stone under the appletree, that leads into the vaulted chamber under thy garden at York?" The Jew grew as pale as death—"But fear nothing from me," continued the yeoman, "for we are of old acquainted. Dost thou not remember the sick yeoman whom thy fair daughter Rebecca redeemed from the gyves at York, and kept him in thy house till his health was restored, when thou didst dismiss him recovered, and with a piece of money?—Usurer as thou art, thou didst never place coin at better

interest than that poor silver mark, for it has this day saved thee five hundred crowns."

"And thou art he whom we called Diccon Bend-the-Bow?" said Isaac; "I thought ever I knew the accent of thy voice."

"I am Bend-the-Bow," said the Captain, "and Locksley, and have a good name besides all those."

"But thou art mistaken, good Bend-the-Bow, concerning that same vaulted apartment. So help me Heaven, as there is nought in it but some merchandizes which I will gladly part with to you—one hundred yards of Lincoln green to make doublets to thy men, and a hundred staves of Spanish yew to make bows, and one hundred silken bow-strings, tough, round, and sound—these will I send thee for thy good-will, honest Diccon, an thou wilt keep silence about the vault, my good Diccon."

"Silent as a dormouse," said the Outlaw; "and never trust me but I am grieved for thy daughter. But I may not help it—The Templar's lances are too strong for my archery—they would scatter us like dust. Had I but known it

was Rebecca when she was borne off, something might have been done; but now thou must needs proceed by policy. Come, shall I treat for thee with the Prior?"

"In God's name, Diccon, an thou canst aid me to recover the child of my bosom."

"Do not thou interrupt me with thine ill-timed avarice," said the Outlaw, "and I will deal with him in thy behalf."

He then turned from the Jew, who followed him, however, as closely as his shadow.

"Prior Aymer," said the Captain, "come apart with me under this tree. Men say thou dost love wine, and a lady's smile, better than beseems thy Order, Sir Priest; but with that I have nought to do. I have heard, too, thou dost love a brace of good dogs and a fleet horse, and it may well be that thou hatest not a purse of gold. But I have never heard that thou didst love oppression or cruelty.—Now, here is Isaac willing to give thee the means of pleasure and pastime in a bag containing one hundred marks of silver, if thy intercession with thine ally the Templar shall avail to procure the freedom of his daughter."

"In safety and honour, as when taken from me," said the Jew, "otherwise it is no bargain."

"Peace, Isaac," said the Outlaw, "or I give up thine interest.—What say you to this my purpose, Prior Aymer?"

"The matter," quoth the Prior, "is of a mixed condition; for, if I do a good deed on the one hand, yet, on the other, it goeth to the vantage of a Jew, and in so much is against my conscience. Yet, if the Israelite will advantage the Church by giving me somewhat over to the building of our dortour,* I will take it on my conscience to aid him in the matter of his daughter."

"For a score of marks to the dortour," said the Outlaw,—"Be still, I say, Isaac!—or for a brace of silver candlesticks to the altar, we will not stand with you."

"Nay, but, good Diccon Bend-the-Bow"—said Isaac, endeavouring to interpose.

"Good Jew—good beast—good earth-worm!" said the yeoman, losing patience; "an thou dost go on to put thy filthy lucre in the balance with

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* *Dortour* or dormitory.

thy daughter's life and honour, by Heaven, I will strip thee of every maravedi thou hast in the world, before three days are out!"

Isaac shrunk together, and was silent.

"And what pledge am I to have for all this?" said the Prior.

"When Isaac returns successful through your mediation," said the Outlaw, "I swear by Saint Hubert, I will see that he pays thee the money in good silver, or I will reckon with him for it in such sort, he had better have paid twenty such sums."

"Well then, Jew," said Aymer, "since I must needs meddle in this matter, let me have the use of thy writing tablets—though, hold—rather than use thy pen, I would fast for twenty-four hours, and where shall I find one?"

"If your holy scruples can dispense with using the Jew's tablets, for the pen I can find a remedy," said the yeoman: And, bending his bow, he aimed his shaft at a wild-goose which was soaring over their heads, the advanced-guard of a phalanx of his tribe, which were winging

their way to the distant and solitary fens of Holderness. The bird came fluttering down, transfixed with the arrow.

"There, Prior," said the Captain, "are quills enow to supply all the monks of Jorvaulx for the next hundred years, an they take not to writing chronicles."

The Prior sat down, and at great leisure indited an epistle to Brian de Bois-Guilbert, and, having carefully sealed up the tablets, delivered them to the Jew, saying, "This will be thy safe conduct to the Preceptory of Templestowe, and, as I think, is most likely to accomplish the delivery of thy daughter, if it be well backed with proffers of advantage and commodity at thine own hand; for, trust me well, the good Knight Bois-Guilbert is of their confraternity that do nought for nought."

"Well, Prior," said the Outlaw, "I will detain thee no longer here than to give the Jew a quittance for the five hundred crowns at which thy ransom is fixed—I accept of him for my paymaster; and if I hear that ye boggle at allowing him in his accompts the sum so paid by him,

Saint Mary refuse me, an I burn not the abbey over thine head, though I hang ten years the sooner."

With a much worse grace than that wherewith he had penned the letter to Bois-Guilbert, the Prior wrote an acquittance, discharging Isaac of York of five hundred crowns, advanced to him in his need for acquittal of his ransom, and faithfully promised to hold true compt with him for that sum.

"And now," said Prior Aymer, "I will pray you of restitution of my mules and palfreys, and the freedom of the reverend brethren attending upon me, and also of the gymmal rings, jewels, and fair vestures, of which I have been despoiled, having now satisfied you for my ransom as a true prisoner."

"Touching your brethren, Sir Prior," said Locksley, "they shall have present freedom, it were unjust to detain them; touching your horses and mules, they shall also be restored, with such spending-money as may enable you to reach York, for it were cruel to deprive you of the means of journeying.—But as concerning

rings, jewels, chains, and what else, you must understand that we are men of tender consciences, and will not yield to a venerable man like yourself, who should be dead to the vanities of this life, the strong temptation to break the rule of his foundation by wearing rings, chains, or other vain gauds."

"Think what you do, my masters," said the Prior, "ere you put your hand on the Church's patrimony—These things are *inter res sacras*, and I wot not what judgment might ensue were they to be handled by laical hands."

"I will take care of that, reverend Friar," said the Hermit of Copmanhurst; "for I will wear them myself."

"Friend, or brother," said the Prior, in answer to this solution of his doubts, "if thou hast really taken religious orders, I pray thee to look how thou wilt answer to thine official for the share thou hast taken in this day's work."

"Friend Prior," returned the Hermit, "you are to know that I belong to a little diocese, where I am my own diocesan, and care as little

for the Bishop of York as I do for the Abbot of Jorvaulx, the Prior, and all the convent."

"Thou art utterly irregular," said the Prior; "one of those disorderly men, who, taking on them the sacred character without due cause, profane the holy rites, and endanger the souls of those who take counsel at their hands; *lapides pro pane condonantes iis*, giving them stones instead of bread, as the Vulgate hath it."

"Nay," said the Friar, "an my brain-pan could have been broken by Latin, it had not held so long together. I say, that easing a world of such misproud priests as thou art of their jewels and their gim-cracks, is a lawful spoiling of the Egyptians."

"Thou be'st a hedge-priest," said the Prior, in great wrath, "*excommunicabo vos*."

"Thou be'st thyself more like a thief and a heretic," said the Friar, equally indignant; "I will pouch up no such affront before my parishioners, as thou thinkest it not shame to put upon me, although I be a reverend brother to thee; *ossa ejus perfringam*, I will break your bones, as the Vulgate hath it."

"Holla," cried the Captain, "come the reverend brethren to such terms?—keep thine assurance of peace, Friar.—Prior, an thou hast not made thy peace with God, provoke the Friar no further.—Hermit, let the reverend father in God depart in peace, as a ransomed man."

The yeomen separated the incensed priests, who continued to raise their voices, vituperating each other in bad Latin, which the Prior delivered most fluently, and the Hermit with the greater vehemence. The Prior at length recollected himself sufficiently to be aware that he was compromising his dignity, by squabbling with such a hedge-priest as the Outlaw's chaplain, and being joined by his attendants, rode off with considerably less pomp, and in a much more apostolical condition, so far as worldly matters were concerned, than he had exhibited before this rencounter.

It remained that the Jew should produce some security for the ransom which he was to pay on the Prior's account, as well as upon his own. He gave, accordingly, an order sealed with his signet, to a brother of his tribe at York, requiring

him to pay to the bearer the sum of a thousand crowns, and to deliver certain merchandizes specified in the note.

"My brother Sheva," he said, groaning deeply, "hath the key of my warehouses."

"And of the vaulted chamber?" whispered Locksley.

"No, no—may heaven forefend!" said Isaac; "evil is the hour that let any one whomsoever into that secret."

"It is safe with me," said the Outlaw, "so be that this thy scroll produce the sum therein nominated and set down.—But what now, Isaac? art dead? art stupified? hath the payment of a thousand crowns put thy daughter's peril out of thy mind?"

The Jew started to his feet—"No, Diccon, no—I will presently set forth.—Farewell, thou whom I may not call good, and dare not and will not call evil."

Yet ere Isaac departed, the Outlaw Chief bestowed on him this parting advice:—"Be liberal of thine offers, Isaac, and spare not thy purse

for thy daughter's safety. Credit me, that the gold thou shalt spare in her cause, will hereafter give thee as much agony as if it were poured molten down thy throat."

Isaac acquiesced with a deep groan, and set forth on his journey, accompanied by two tall foresters, who were to be his guides, and at the same time his guards through the wood.

The Black Knight, who had seen with no small interest these various proceedings, now took his leave of the Outlaw in turn; nor could he avoid expressing his surprise at having witnessed so much of civil policy amongst persons cast out from all the ordinary protection and influence of the laws.

"Good fruit, Sir Knight," said the yeoman, "will sometimes grow on a sorry tree; and evil times are not always productive of evil alone and unmixed. Amongst those who are drawn into this lawless state, there are, doubtless, numbers who wish to exercise its licence with some moderation, and some who regret, it may be, that they are obliged to follow such a trade at all."

"And to one of these," said the knight, "I am now, I presume, speaking?"

"Sir Knight," said the Outlaw, "we have each our secret. You are welcome to form your judgment of me, and I may use my conjectures touching you, though neither of our shafts may hit the mark they are shot at. But as I do not pray to be admitted into your mystery, be not offended that I preserve my own."

"I crave pardon, brave Outlaw," said the knight, "your reproof is just. But it may be we shall meet hereafter with less of concealment on either side.—Meanwhile we part friends, do we not?"

"There is my hand upon it," said Locksley; "and I will call it the hand of a true Englishman, though an outlaw for the present."

"And there is mine in return," said the knight; "and I hold it honoured by being clasped with your's. For he that does good, having the unlimited power to do evil, deserves praise not only for the good which he performs, but for the evil which he forbears.—Fare thee well, gallant Outlaw!"

Thus parted that fair fellowship; and He of the Fetterlock, mounting upon his strong war-horse, rode off through the forest.

CHAPTER IV.

> *King John.* I'll tell thee what, my friend,
> He is a very serpent in my way;
> And wheresoe'er this foot of mine doth tread,
> He lies before me.—Doest thou understand me?
> *King John.*

There was brave feasting in the Castle of York, to which Prince John had invited those nobles, prelates, and leaders, by whose assistance he hoped to carry through his ambitious projects upon his brother's throne. Waldemar Fitzurse, his able and politic agent, was at secret work among them, tempering all to that pitch of courage which was necessary in making an open declaration of their purpose. But their enterprize was delayed by the absence of more than one main limb of the confederacy. The stubborn and daring, though brutal courage of Front-de-Bœuf; the buoyant spirits and bold bearing of De Bracy;

the sagacity, martial experience, and renowned valour of Brian de Bois-Guilbert, were important to the success of their conspiracy; and, while cursing in secret their unnecessary and unmeaning absence, neither John nor his adviser dared to proceed without them. Isaac the Jew also seemed to have vanished, and with him the hope of certain sums of money, making up the subsidy for which Prince John had contracted with that Israelite and his brethren. This deficiency was likely to prove perilous in an emergency so critical.

It was on the morning after the fall of Torquilstone, that a confused report began to spread abroad in the city of York, that De Bracy and Bois-Guilbert, with their confederate Front-de-Bœuf, had been taken or slain. Waldemar brought the rumour to Prince John, announcing, that he feared its truth the more that they had set out with a small attendance, for the purpose of committing an assault on the Saxon Cedric and his attendants. At another time the Prince would have treated this deed of violence as a good jest; but now, that it interfered with

and impeded his own plans, he exclaimed against the perpetrators, and spoke of the broken laws, and the infringement of public order and of private property, in a tone which might have become King Alfred.

"The unprincipled marauders!" he said—"were I ever to become monarch of England, I would hang such transgressors over the drawbridges of their own castles."

"But to become monarch of England," said his Achitophel coolly, "it is necessary not only that your Grace should endure the transgressions of these unprincipled marauders, but that you should afford them your protection, notwithstanding your laudable zeal for the laws they are in the habit of infringing. We shall be finely helped, if the churl Saxons should have realized your Grace's vision, of converting feudal drawbridges into gibbets; and yonder bold-spirited Cedric seemeth one to whom such an imagination might occur. Your Grace is well aware, it will be dangerous to stir without Front-de-Bœuf, De Bracy, and the Templar; and yet we have gone too far to recede with safety."

Prince John struck his forehead with impatience, and then began to stride up and down the apartment.

"The villains," he said, "the base, treacherous villains, to desert me at this pinch!"

"Nay, say rather the feather-pated giddy fools," said Waldemar, "who must be toying with follies when such business was in hand."

"What is to be done?" said the Prince, stopping short before Waldemar.

"I know nothing which can be done," answered his counsellor, "save that which I have already taken order for.—I came not to bewail this evil chance with your Grace, until I had done my best to remedy it."

"Thou art ever my better angel, Waldemar," said the Prince; "and when I have such a chancellor to advise withal, the reign of John will be renowned in our annals.—What hast thou commanded?"

"I have caused Louis Winkelbrand, De Bracy's lieutenant, to cause his trumpets sound to horse, and to display his banner, and to set presently forth toward the castle of Front-de-Bœuf,

to do what yet may be done for the succour of our friends."

Prince John's face flushed with the pride of a spoilt child, who has undergone what it conceives to be an insult.

"By the face of God!" he said, "Waldemar Fitzurse, much hast thou taken upon thee; and over malapert thou wert to cause trumpet to blow, or banner to be raised, in a town where ourselves were in presence, without our express command."

"I crave your Grace's pardon," said Fitzurse, internally cursing the idle vanity of his patron; "but when time pressed, and even the loss of minutes might be fatal, I judged it best to take this much burthen upon me, in a matter of such importance to your Grace's interest."

"Thou art pardoned, Fitzurse," said the Prince, gravely; "thy purpose hath atoned for thy hasty rashness.—But whom have we here? —De Bracy himself, by the rood!—and in strange guise doth he come before us."

It was indeed De Bracy—"bloody with spurring, fiery red with speed."—His armour bore all

the marks of the late obstinate fray, being broken, defaced, and stained with blood in many places, and covered with clay and dust from the crest to the spur. Undoing his helmet, he placed it on the table, and stood a moment as if to collect himself before he told his news.

"De Bracy," said Prince John, "what means this?—Speak, I charge thee!—Are the Saxons in rebellion?"

"Speak, De Bracy," said Fitzurse, almost in the same moment with his master, "thou wert wont to be a man—Where is the Templar?—where Front-de-Bœuf?"

"The Templar is fled," said De Bracy; "Front-de-Bœuf you will never see more. He has found a red grave among the blazing rafters of his own castle, and I alone am escaped to tell you."

"Cold news," said Waldemar, "to us, though you speak of fire and conflagration."

"The worst news is not yet said," answered De Bracy; and, coming up to Prince John, he uttered in a low and emphatic tone—"Richard is in England—I have seen and spoken with him."

Prince John turned pale, tottered, and caught at the back of an oaken bench to support himself—much like to a man who receives an arrow in his bosom.

"Thou ravest, De Bracy," said Fitzurse, "it cannot be."

"It is as true as truth itself," said De Bracy; "I was his prisoner, and spoke with him."

"With Richard Plantagenet, sayest thou?" continued Fitzurse.

"With Richard Plantagenet," replied De Bracy, "with Richard Cœur de Lion—with Richard of England."

"And thou wert his prisoner?" said Waldemar; "he is then at the head of a power?"

"No—only a few outlawed yeomen were around him, and to these his person is unknown. I heard him say he was about to depart from them. He joined them only to assist at the storming of Torquilstone."

"Ay," said Fitzurse, "such is indeed the fashion of Richard—a true knight-errant he, and will wander in wild adventure, trusting the prow-

ess of his single arm, like any Sir Guy or Sir Bevis, while the weighty affairs of his kingdom slumber, and his own safety is endangered.—What dost thou propose to do, De Bracy?"

"I—I offered Richard the service of my Free Lances, and he refused them—I will lead them to Hull, seize on shipping, and embark for Flanders; thanks to the bustling times, a man of action will always find employment. And thou, Waldemar, wilt thou take lance and shield, and lay down thy policies and wend along with me, and share the fate which God sends us?"

"I am too old, Maurice, and I have a daughter," answered Waldemar.

"Give her to me, Fitzurse, and I will maintain her as fits her rank, with the help of lance and stirrup," said De Bracy.

"Not so," answered Fitzurse; "I will take sanctuary in this church of Saint Peter—the Archbishop is my sworn brother."

During this discourse, Prince John had gradually awakened from the stupor into which he had been thrown by the unexpected intelligence, and had been attentive to the conversation which passed betwixt his followers. "They fall off from

me," he said to himself, "they hold no more by me than a withered leaf by the bough when a breeze blows on it!—Hell and fiends, can I shape no means for myself when I am deserted by these cravens?"—He paused, and there was an expression of diabolical passion in the constrained laugh with which he at length broke in on their conversation.

"Ha, ha, ha! my good lords, by the light of Our Lady's brow, I held ye sage men, bold men, ready-witted men; yet ye throw down wealth, honour, pleasure, all that our noble game promised you, at the moment it might be won by one bold cast!"

"I understand you not," said De Bracy. "So soon as Richard's return is blown abroad, he will be at the head of an army, and all is then over with us. I would counsel you, my lord, either to fly to France, or take the protection of the Queen Mother."

"I seek no safety for myself," said Prince John, haughtily; "that I could secure by a word spoken to my brother. But although you, De Bracy, and you, Waldemar Fitzurse, are so ready to abandon me, I should not greatly de-

light to see your heads set on Clifford's gate, yonder. Thinkest thou, Waldemar, that the wily Archbishop will not suffer thee to be taken from the very horns of the altar, would it make his peace with King Richard? And forgettest thou, De Bracy, that Robert Estoteville lies betwixt thee and Hull with all his forces, and that the Earl of Essex is gathering his followers? If we had reason to fear these levies even before Richard's return, trowest thou there is any doubt now which party their leaders will take? Trust me, Estoteville alone has strength enough to drive all thy Free Lances into the Humber."—Waldemar Fitzurse and De Bracy looked in each other's faces with blank dismay.—"There is but one road to safety," continued the Prince, and his brow grew black as midnight; "this object of our terror journeys alone—He must be met withal."

"Not by me," said De Bracy, hastily; "I was his prisoner, and he took me to mercy—I will not harm a feather in his crest."

"Who spoke of harming him?" said Prince John, with a hardened laugh; "the knave will say next that I meant he should slay him!—No—a prison were better; and whether in Britain or

Austria, what matters it ?—Things will be but as they were when we commenced our enterprize —It was founded on the hope that Richard would remain a captive in Germany—Our uncle Robert lived and died in the castle of Cardiffe."

"Ay, but," said Waldemar, "your grandsire Henry sate more firm on his seat than your Grace can. I say the best prison is that which is made by the sexton—no dungeon like a church-vault! I have said my say."

"Prison or tomb," said De Bracy, "I wash my hands of the whole matter."

"Villain!" said Prince John, "thou wouldest not bewray our counsel?"

"Counsel was never bewrayed by me," said De Bracy, haughtily, "nor must the name of villain be coupled with mine."

"Peace, Sir Knight!" said Waldemar;—"and you, good my lord, forgive the scruples of valiant De Bracy; I trust I shall soon remove them."

"That passes your eloquence, Fitzurse," replied the knight.

"Why, good Sir Maurice," rejoined the wily politician, "start not aside like a scared steed,

without, at least, considering the object of your terror.—This Richard—but a day since, and it would have been thy dearest wish to have met him hand to hand in the ranks of battle—one hundred times I have heard thee wish it."

"Ay," said De Bracy, "but that was as thou sayest, hand to hand, and in the ranks of battle! Thou never heardest me breathe a thought of assaulting him alone, and in a forest?"

"Thou art no good knight if thou dost scruple at it," said Waldemar. "Was it in battle that Lancelot de Lac and Sir Tristram won renown? or was it not by encountering gigantic knights under the shade of deep and unknown forests?"

"Ay, but I promise you," said De Bracy, "that neither Tristram nor Lancelot would have been match, hand to hand, for Richard Plantagenet, and I think it was not their wont to take odds against a single man."

"Thou art mad, De Bracy—what is it we propose to thee, a hired and retained captain of Free Companions, whose swords are purchased for Prince John's service? Thou art apprized of our enemy, and then thou scruplest, though thy pa-

tron's fortunes, those of thy comrades, thine own, and the life and honour of every one amongst us be at stake!"

"I tell you," said De Bracy, sullenly, "that he gave me my life. True, he sent me from his presence, and refused my homage—so far I owe him neither favour nor allegiance—but I will not lift hand against him."

"It needs not—send Louis Winkelman and a score of thy lances."

"Ye have sufficient ruffians of your own," said De Bracy; "not one of mine shall budge on such an errand."

"Art thou so obstinate, De Bracy?" said Prince John; "and wilt thou forsake me, after so many protestations of zeal for my service?"

"I mean it not," said De Bracy; "I will abide by you in aught that becomes a knight, whether in the lists or in the camp; but this highway practice comes not within my vow."

"Come hither, Waldemar," said Prince John. "An unhappy prince am I. My father, King Henry, had faithful servants—He had but to say that he was plagued with a factious priest, and the blood of Thomas-a-Becket, saint though

he was, stained the steps of his own altar.—Tracy, Morville, Brito,* loyal and daring subjects, your names, your spirit, are extinct! and although Reginald Fitzurse hath left a son, he hath fallen off from his father's fidelity and courage."

"He has fallen off from neither," said Waldemar Fitzurse; "and since it may not better be, I will take on me the conduct of this perilous enterprize. Dearly, however, did my father purchase the praise of a zealous friend; and yet did his proof of loyalty to Henry fall far short of what I am about to afford; for rather would I assail a whole calendar of saints, than put spear in rest against Cœur de Lion.—De Bracy, to thee I must trust to keep up the spirits of the doubtful, and to guard Prince John's person. If you receive such news as I trust to send you, our enterprize will no longer wear a doubtful aspect.

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* Reginald Fitzurse, William de Tracy, Hugh de Morville, and Richard Brito, were the gentlemen of Henry the Second's household, who, instigated by some passionate expressions of their sovereign, slew the celebrated Thomas-a-Becket.

—Page," he said, "hie to my lodgings, and tell my armourer to be there in readiness; and bid Stephen Wetheral, Broad Thoresby, and the three spears of Spyinghow, attend me instantly; and let the scout-master, Hugh Bardon, attend me also. Adieu, my Prince, till better times." Thus speaking, he left the apartment.

"He goes to make my brother prisoner," said Prince John to De Bracy, "with as little touch of compunction as if it but concerned the liberty of a Saxon Franklin. I trust he will observe our orders, and use our dear Richard's person with all due respect."

De Bracy only answered by a smile.

"By the light of Our Lady's brow," said Prince John, "our orders to him were most precise—though it may be you heard them not, as we stood together in the oriel window—Most clear and positive was our charge that Richard's safety should be cared for, and woe to Waldemar's head if he transgress it!"

"I had better pass to his lodgings," said De Bracy, "and make him fully aware of your Grace's pleasure; for, as it quite escaped my

ear, it may not perchance have reached that of Waldemar."

"Nay, nay," said Prince John impatiently, "I promise thee he heard me; and, besides, I have farther occupation for thee. Maurice, come hither, let me lean on thy shoulder."

They walked a turn through the hall in this familiar posture, and Prince John, with an air of the most confidential intimacy, proceeded to say, "What thinkest thou of this Waldemar Fitzurse, my De Bracy?—He trusts to be our Chancellor. Surely we will pause ere we give an office so high to one who shows evidently how little he reverences our blood, by his so readily undertaking this enterprize against Richard. Thou dost think, I warrant, that thou hast lost somewhat of our regard, by thy boldly declining this unpleasing task—But no, Maurice! I rather honour thee for thy virtuous constancy. There are things most necessary to be done, the perpetrator of which we neither love nor honour; and there may be refusals to serve us, which shall rather exalt in our estimation those who deny our request. The arrest of my unfortunate bro-

ther forms no such good title to the high office of Chancellor, as thy chivalrous and courageous denial establishes in thee to the truncheon of High Marshal. Think of this, De Bracy, and begone to thy charge."——

"Fickle tyrant!" muttered De Bracy, as he left the presence of the Prince; "evil luck have they who trust thee. Thy Chancellor, indeed! —He who hath the keeping of thy conscience shall have an easy charge, I trow. But High Marshal of England! that," he said, extending his arm, as if to grasp the baton of office, and assuming a loftier stride along the anti-chamber, "that is indeed a prize worth playing for!"

De Bracy had no sooner left the apartment than Prince John summoned an attendant.

"Bid Hugh Bardon, our scout-master, come hither, so soon as he shall have spoken with Waldemar Fitzurse."

The scout-master arrived after a brief delay, during which John traversed the apartment with unequal and disordered steps.

"Bardon," said he, "what did Waldemar desire of thee?"

"Two resolute men, well acquainted with these northern wilds, and skilful in tracking the tread of man and horse."

"And thou hast fitted him?"

"Let your Grace never trust me else," answered the master of the spies. "One is from Hexhamshire; he is wont to trace the Tynedale and Teviotdale thieves, as a blood-hound follows the slot of a hurt deer. The other is Yorkshire bred, and has twanged his bow-string right oft in merry Sherwood; he knows each glade and dingle, copse and high-wood, betwixt this and Richmond."

"'Tis well," said the Prince. "Goes Waldemar forth with them?"

"Instantly," said Bardon.

"With what attendance?" replied John carelessly.

"Broad Thorsby goes with him, and Wetheral, whom they call, for his cruelty, Stephen Steel-heart; and three northern men-at-arms that belonged to Ralph Middleton's gang—they are called the Spears of Spyinglaw."

"'Tis well," said Prince John; then added,

after a moment's pause, "Bardon, it imports our service that thou keep a strict watch on Maurice De Bracy—so that he shall not observe it, however—And let us know of his motions from time to time—with whom he converses, what he proposeth. Fail not in this, as thou wilt be answerable."

Hugh Bardon bowed, and retired.

"If Maurice betrays me," said Prince John —"if he betrays me, as his bearing leads me to fear, I will have his head, were Richard thundering at the gates of York!"

CHAPTER V.

Arouse the tiger of Hyrcanian deserts,
Strive with the half-starved lion for his prey;
Lesser the risk, than rouse the slumbering fire
Of wild Fanaticism.

Anonymous.

Our tale now returns to Isaac of York.—Mounted upon a mule, the gift of the Outlaw, with two tall yeomen to act as his guard and guides, the Jew had set out for the Preceptory of Templestowe, for the purpose of negociating his daughter's redemption. The Preceptory was but a day's journey from the demolished castle of Torquilstone, and the Jew had hoped to reach it before nightfall; accordingly, having dismissed his guides at the verge of the forest, and rewarded them with a piece of silver, he began to press on with such speed as his weariness permitted him to exert. But his strength failed him

totally ere he had reached within four miles of the Temple-Court; racking pains shot along his back and through his limbs, and the excessive anguish which he felt at heart being now augmented by bodily suffering, he was rendered altogether incapable of proceeding farther than a small market-town, where dwelt a Jewish Rabbi of his tribe, eminent in the medical profession, and to whom Isaac was well known. Nathan Ben Israel received his suffering countryman with that kindness which the law prescribed, and which the Jews practised to each other. He insisted on his betaking himself to repose, and used such remedies as were then in most repute to check the progress of the fever, which terror, fatigue, and sorrow, had brought upon the poor old Jew.

On the morrow, when Isaac proposed to arise and pursue his journey, Nathan remonstrated against his purpose, both as his host and as his physician. It might cost him, he said, his life. But Isaac replied, that more than life and death depended upon his going that morning to Templestowe.

"To Templestowe!" said his host with surprise; again felt his pulse, and then muttered to himself, "His fever is abated, yet seems his mind somewhat alienated and disturbed."

"And why not to Templestowe?" answered his patient. "I grant thee, Nathan, that it is a dwelling of those to whom the despised Children of the Promise are a stumbling-block and an abomination; yet thou knowest that pressing affairs of traffic sometimes carry us amongst these blood-thirsty Nazarene soldiers, and that we visit the Preceptories of the Templars, as well as the Commanderies of the Knights Hospitallers, as they are called."*

"I know it well," said Nathan; "but wottest thou that Lucas de Beaumanoir, the chief of their Order, and whom they term Grand Master, is now himself at Templestowe?"

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* The establishments of the Knights Templars were called Preceptories, and the title of those who presided in the Order was Preceptor, as the principal Knights of Saint John were termed Commanders, and their houses Commanderies. But these terms were sometimes, it would seem, used indiscriminately.

"I know it not," said Isaac; "our last letters from our brethren at Paris avised him to be at that city, beseeching Philip for aid against the Sultan Saladine."

"He hath since come to England, unexpected by his brethren; and he cometh among them with a strong and outstretched arm to correct and to punish. His countenance is kindled in anger against those who have departed from the vow which they have made, and great is the fear of those sons of Belial. Thou must have heard of his name?"

"It is well known unto me," said Isaac; "the Gentiles deliver this Lucas Beaumanoir as a man zealous to slaying for every point of the Nazarene law; and our brethren have termed him a cruel destroyer of the Saracens, and a cruel tyrant to the Children of the Promise."

"And truly have they termed him," said Nathan the physician. "Other Templars may be moved from the purpose of their heart by pleasure, or bribed by promise of gold and silver; but Beaumanoir is of a different stamp—hating

sensuality, despising treasure, and pressing forward to that which they call the crown of martyrdom—The God of Jacob speedily send it unto him, and over them all!—Specially hath this proud man extended his glove over the children of Judah, as holy David over Edom, holding the murther of a Jew to be an offering of as sweet savour as the death of a Saracen. Impious and false things has he said even of the virtues of our medicines, as if they were the devices of Satan—The Lord rebuke him!"

"Nevertheless," said Isaac, "I must present myself at Templestowe, though he hath made his face like unto an fiery furnace seven times heated."

He then explained unto Nathan the pressing cause of his journey. The Rabbi listened with interest, and testified his sympathy after the fashion of his people, rending his clothes, and saying, "Ah, my daughter!—ah, my daughter!—Alas! for the daughter of Zion—Alas! for the captivity of Israel!"

"Thou seest," said Isaac, "how it stands with me, and that I may not tarry. Peradven-

ture, the presence of this Lucas Beaumanoir, being the chief man over them, may turn Brian de Bois-Guilbert from the ill which he doth meditate, and that he may deliver to me my beloved daughter Rebecca."

"Go thou," said Nathan Ben Israel, "and be wise, for wisdom availed Daniel in the den of lions into which he was cast; and may it go well with thee, even as thy heart wisheth. Yet if thou canst, keep thee from the presence of the Grand Master, for to do foul scorn to our people is his morning and evening delight. It may be if thou couldst speak with Bois-Guilbert in private, thou shalt the better prevail with him; for men say that these accursed Nazarenes are not at one together in the Preceptory—May their counsels be confounded and brought to shame! But do thou, brother, return to me as if it were to the house of thy father, and bring me word how it has sped with thee; and well do I hope thou wilt bring with thee Rebecca, even the scholar of the wise Miriam, whose cures the Gentiles slandered as if they had been wrought by necromancy."

Isaac accordingly bade his friend farewell, and about an hour's riding brought him before the Preceptory of Templestowe.

This establishment of the Templars was seated amidst fair meadows and pastures, which the devotion of the former Preceptor had bestowed upon their Order. It was strong and well fortified, a point never neglected by these knights, and which the disordered state of England rendered peculiarly necessary. Two halberdiers, clad in black, guarded the draw-bridge, and others, in the same sad livery, glided to and fro upon the walls with a funereal pace, resembling spectres more than soldiers. The inferior officers of the Order were thus dressed, ever since their use of white garments, similar to those of the knights and esquires, had given rise to a combination of certain false brethren in the mountains of Palestine, terming themselves Templars, and bringing great dishonour on the Order. A knight was now and then seen to cross the court in his long white cloak, his head depressed on his breast, and his arms folded. They passed each other, if they

chanced to meet, with a slow, solemn, and mute greeting; for such was the rule of their Order, quoting thereupon the holy texts, "In many words thou shalt not avoid sin," and "Life and death are in the power of the tongue." In a word, the stern ascetic rigour of the Temple discipline, which had been so long exchanged for prodigal and licentious indulgence, seemed at once to have revived at Templestowe under the severe eye of Lucas Beaumanoir.

Isaac paused at the gate, to consider how he might seek entrance in the manner most likely to bespeak favour; for he was well aware, that to his unhappy race the reviving fanaticism of the Order was not less dangerous than their unprincipled licentiousness; and that his religion would be the object of hate and persecution in the one case, as his wealth would have exposed him in the other to the extortions of unrelenting oppression.

Meantime Lucas Beaumanoir walked in a small garden belonging to the Preceptory, included within the precincts of its exterior fortification, and held sad and confidential communication

with a brother of his Order, who had come in his company from Palestine.

The Grand Master was a man advanced in age, as was testified by his long grey beard, and the shaggy grey eye-brows over-hanging eyes, of which, however, years had been unable to quench the fire. A formidable warrior, his thin and severe features retained the soldier's fierceness of expression; an ascetic bigot, they were no less marked by the emaciation of abstinence, and the spiritual pride of the self-satisfied devotee. Yet, with these severer traits of physiognomy, there was mixed somewhat striking and noble, arising, doubtless, from the great part which his high office called upon him to act among monarchs and princes, and from the habitual exercise of supreme authority over the valiant and high-born knights, who were united by the rules of the order. His stature was tall, and his gait, undepressed by age and toil, was erect and stately. His white mantle was shaped with severe regularity, according to the rule of Saint Bernard himself, being composed of what was then called Burrel cloth, justly fitted to the size of the wearer, and bearing on

the left shoulder the octangular cross peculiar to the Order, formed of red cloth. No vair or ermine decked this garment; but in respect of his age, the Grand Master, as permitted by the rules, wore his doublet lined and trimmed with the softest lambskin, dressed with the wool outwards, which was the nearest approach he could regularly make to the use of fur, then the greatest luxury of dress. In his hand he bore that singular *abacus*, or staff of office, with which Templars are often represented, having at the upper end a round plate, on which was engraved the cross of the Order, inscribed within a circle or orle, as heralds term it. His companion, who attended on this great personage, had nearly the same dress in all respects, but his extreme deference towards his superior shewed that no other equality subsisted between them. The Preceptor, for such he was in rank, walked not in a line with the Grand Master, but just so far behind that Beaumanoir could speak to him without turning round his head.

"Conrade," said the Grand Master, "dear companion of my battles and my toils, to thy

faithful bosom alone I can confide my sorrows. To thee alone can I tell how oft, since I came to this kingdom, I have desired to be dissolved and to be with the just. Not one object in England hath met mine eye which it could rest upon with pleasure, save the tombs of our brethren, beneath the massive roof of our Temple Church in yonder proud capital. O, valiant Robert de Ros! did I exclaim internally, as I gazed upon these good soldiers of the cross, where they lie sculptured on their tombs,—O, worthy William de Mareschal! open your marble cells, and take to your repose a weary brother, who would rather strive with a hundred thousand pagans than witness the decay of our Holy Order!"

"It is but true," answered Conrade Mont-Fitchet; "it is but too true; and the irregularities of our brethren in England are even more gross than those in France."

"Because they are more wealthy," answered the Grand Master. "Bear with me, brother, although I should something vaunt myself. Thou knowest the life I have led, keeping each point of my Order, striving with devils embodied and

disembodied, striking down the roaring lion, who goeth about seeking whom he may devour, like a good knight and devout priest, wheresoever I met with him—even as blessed Saint Bernard hath prescribed to us in the forty-fifth capital of our rule, *Ut Leo semper feriatur.* But, by the Holy Temple! the zeal which hath devoured my substance and my life, yea, the very nerves and marrow of my bones; by that very Holy Temple I swear to thee, that save thyself, and some few that still retain the ancient severity of our Order, I look upon no brethren whom I can bring my soul to embrace under that holy name. What say our statutes, and how do our brethren observe them? They should wear no vain or worldly ornament, no crest upon their helmet, no gold upon stirrup or bridle-bit; yet who now go pranked out so proudly and so gaily, as the poor soldiers of the Temple? They are forbidden to take one bird by means of another, to shoot beasts with bow or arblast, to halloo to a hunting-horn, or to spur the horse after game. But now, at hunting and hawking, and each idle sport of wood and river, who so prompt as they in all these fond

vanities? They are forbidden to read, save what their Superior permitted, or what holy thing was read aloud during the hours of refection; and they were commanded to extirpate magic and heresy. Lo! they are charged with studying the accursed cabalistical secrets of the Jews, and the magic of the Paynim Saracens. Simpleness of diet was prescribed to them, roots, pottage, gruels, eating flesh but thrice a-week, because the accustomed feeding on flesh is a dishonourable corruption of the body; and behold, their tables groan under delicate fare. Their drink was to be water; and now, to drink like a Templar, is the boast of each jolly boon companion! This very garden, filled as it is with curious herbs and trees sent from the eastern climes, better becomes the haram of an unbelieving Emir, than the plot which Christian monks should devote to raise their pot-herbs.—And O, Conrade! well it were that the relaxation of discipline stopped even here!—Well thou knowest that we were forbidden to receive those devout women, who at the beginning were associated as sisters of our Order, because, saith the

forty-sixth chapter, the Ancient Enemy hath, by female society, withdrawn many from the right path to paradise. Nay, in the last capital, being, as it were, the cope-stone which our blessed founder placed on the pure and undefiled doctrine which he had enjoined, we are prohibited from offering, even to our sisters and our mothers, the kiss of affection—*ut omnium mulierum fugiantur oscula.*—I shame to speak—I shame to think—of the corruptions which have rushed in upon us even like a flood. The souls of our pure founders, the spirits of Hugh de Payen and Godfrey de Saint Omer, and of the blessed Seven who first joined in dedicating their lives to the service of the Temple, are disturbed even in the enjoyment of paradise itself. I have seen them, Conrade, in the visions of the night—their sainted eyes shed tears for the sins and follies of their brethren, and for the foul and shameful luxury in which they wallow. Beaumanoir, they say, thou slumberest—awake! There is a stain in the fabric of the Temple, deep and foul as that left by the streaks of leprosy on the walls of the in-

fected houses of old.* The soldiers of the Cross, who should shun the glance of woman as the eye of a basilisk, live in open sin, not with the females of their own race only, but with the daughters of the accursed heathen and more accursed Jew. Beaumanoir, thou sleepest, up, and avenge our cause!—Slay the sinners, male and female! —Take to thee the brand of Phineas!—The vision fled, Conrade, but as I awaked I could still hear the clank of their mail, and see the waving of their white mantles.—And I will do according to their word, I WILL purify the fabric of the Temple! and the unclean stones in which the plague is, I will remove and cast out of the building."

"Yet bethink thee, reverend father," said Mont-Fitchet, "the stain hath become engrained by time and consuetude; let thy reformation be cautious, as it is just and wise."

"No, Mont-Fitchet—it must be sharp and sudden—the Order is on the crisis of its fate.

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* See the 13th chapter of Leviticus.

The sobriety, self-devotion, and piety of our predecessors, made us powerful friends—our presumption, our wealth, our luxury, hath raised up against us mighty enemies.—We must cast away these riches, which are a temptation to princes—we must lay down that presumption, which is an offence to them—we must reform that license of manners, which is a scandal to the whole Christian world! Or—mark my words—the Order of the Temple will be utterly demolished—and the place thereof shall no more be known among the nations."

"Now may God avert such a calamity!" said the Preceptor.

"Amen," said the Grand Master, with solemnity, "but we must deserve his aid. I tell thee, Conrade, that neither the powers in Heaven nor the powers on earth, will longer endure the wickedness of this generation—My intelligence is sure—the ground on which our fabric is reared is already undermined, and each addition we make to the structure of our greatness will only sink it the sooner in the abyss. We must retrace

our steps, and shew ourselves the faithful Champions of the Cross, sacrificing to our calling, not alone our blood and our lives—not alone our lusts and our vices—but our ease, our comforts, and our natural affections, and many a pleasure that may be lawful to others, but is forbidden to the vowed soldier of the Temple."

At this moment a squire, clothed in a threadbare vestment, (for the aspirants after this holy Order wore during their novitiate the cast-off garments of the knights,) entered the garden, and, bowing profoundly before the Grand Master, stood silent, awaiting his permission ere he presumed to tell his errand.

"Is it not more seemly," said the Grand Master, "to see this Damian, clothed in the garments of Christian humility, thus appear with reverend silence before his Superior, than but two days since, when the fond fool was decked in a painted coat, and jangling as pert and as proud as any popinjay?—Speak, Damian, we permit thee —What is thine errand?"

"A Jew stands without the gate, noble and

reverend father, who prays to speak with brother Brian de Bois-Guilbert."

"Thou wert right to give me knowledge of it," said the Grand Master; "in our presence a Preceptor is but as a common compeer of our Order, who may not walk according to his own will, but to that of his master—even according to the text, 'In the hearing of the ear he hath obeyed me.'—It imports us especially to know of this Bois-Guilbert's proceedings," said he, turning to his companion.

"Report speaks him brave and valiant," said Conrade.

"And truly is he so spoken of," said the Grand Master; "in our valour only we are not degenerated from our predecessors, the heroes of the Cross. But brother Brian came into our Order a moody and disappointed man, stirred, I doubt me, to take our vows and to renounce the world, not in sincerity of soul, but as one whom some touch of light discontent had driven into penitence. Since then, he hath become an active and earnest agitator, a murmurer, and a machinator, and a leader amongst those who impugn our au-

thority; not considering that the rule is given to the Master even by the symbol of the staff and the rod—the staff to support the infirmities of the weak—the rod to correct the faults of delinquents.—Damian," he continued, "lead the Jew to our presence."

The squire departed with a profound reverence, and in a few minutes returned, marshalling in Isaac of York. No naked slave, ushered into the presence of some mighty prince, could approach his judgment-seat with more profound reverence and terror than that with which the Jew drew near to the presence of the Grand Master. When he had approached within the distance of three yards, Beaumanoir made a sign with his staff that he should come no farther. The Jew kneeled down on the earth, which he kissed in token of reverence; then rising, stood before the Templars, his hands folded on his bosom, his head bowed on his breast, in all the submission of oriental slavery.

"Damian," said the Grand Master, "retire, and have a guard ready to await our sudden call; and suffer no one to enter the garden until we

shall leave it."—The squire bowed and retreated.—"Jew," continued the haughty old man, "mark me. It suits not our condition to hold with thee long communication, nor do we waste words or time upon any one. Wherefore be brief in thy answers to what questions I shall ask thee, and let thy words be of truth; for if thy tongue doubles with me, I will have it torn from thy misbelieving jaws."

The Jew was about to reply, but the Grand Master went on.

"Peace, unbeliever!—not a word in our presence, save in answer to our questions.—What is thy business with our brother Brian de Bois-Guilbert?"

Isaac gasped with terror and uncertainty. To tell his tale might be interpreted into scandalizing the Order; yet, unless he told it, what hope could he have of achieving his daughter's deliverance? Beaumanoir saw his mortal apprehension, and condescended to give him some assurance.

"Fear nothing," he said, "for thy wretched person, Jew, so thou dealest uprightly in this matter.—I demand again to know from thee thy business with Brian de Bois-Guilbert?"

"I am bearer of a letter," stammered out the Jew, "so please your reverend valour, to that good knight, from Prior Aymer of the Abbey of Jorvaulx."

"Said I not these were evil times, Conrade?" said the Master. "A Cistercian Prior sends a letter to a soldier of the Temple, and can find no more fitting messenger than an unbelieving Jew.—Give me the letter."

The Jew, with trembling hands, undid the folds of his Armenian cap, in which he had deposited the Prior's tablets for the greater security, and was about to approach, with hand extended and body crouch'd, to place it within the reach of his grim interrogator.

"Back, dog!" said the Grand Master; "I touch not misbelievers, save with the sword.—Conrade, take thou the letter from the Jew, and give it to me."

Beaumanoir, being thus possessed of the tablets, inspected the outside carefully, and then proceeded to undo the packthread which secured its folds. "Reverend Father," said Conrade, interposing, though with much deference, "wilt thou break the seal?"

"And will I not?" said Beaumanoir, with a frown. "Is it not written in the forty-second capital, *De Lectione Literarum*, that a Templar shall not receive a letter, no not from his father, without communicating the same to the Grand Master, and reading it in his presence?"

He then perused the letter in haste, with an expression of surprise and horror; read it over again more slowly; then holding it out to Conrade with one hand, and slightly striking it with the other, exclaimed,—"Here is goodly stuff for one Christian man to write to another, and both members, and no inconsiderable members, of religious professions! When," said he solemnly, and looking upward, "wilt thou come with thy fanners to purge the threshing-floor?"

Mont-Fitchet took the letter from his superior, and was about to peruse it. "Read it

aloud, Conrade," said the Grand Master, "and do thou (to Isaac) attend to the purport of it, for we will question thee concerning it."

Conrade read the letter, which was in these words: "Aymer, by divine grace, Prior of the Cistercian house of Saint Mary's of Jorvaulx, to Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert, a Knight of the holy Order of the Temple, wisheth health, with the bounties of Bacchus and of my Lady Venus. Touching our present condition, dear Brother, we are a captive in the hands of certain lawless and godless men, who have not feared to detain our person, and put us to ransom, whereby we have also learned of Front-de-Bœuf's misfortune, and that thou hast escaped with that fair Jewish sorceress, whose black eyes have bewitched thee. We are heartily rejoiced of thy safety; nevertheless, we pray thee to be on thy guard in the matter of this second Witch of Endor; for we are privately assured that your Great Master, who careth not a bean for cherry cheeks and black eyes, comes from Normandy to diminish your mirth, and amend your misdoings. Wherefore we pray you heartily to beware, and to be

found watching, even as the Holy Text hath it, *Invenientur vigilantes.* And the wealthy Jew her father, Isaac of York, having prayed of me letters in his behalf, I gave him these, earnestly advising that you do hold the damsel to ransom, seeing he will pay you from his bags as much as may find fifty damsels upon safer terms, whereof I trust to have my part when we make merry together, as true brothers, not forgetting the wine-cup. For what saith the text, *Vinum laetificat cor hominis ;* and again, *Rex delectabitur pulchritudine tua.*

"Till which merry meeting, we wish you farewell. Given from this den of thieves, about the hour of mattins,

"AYMER PR. S. M. JORVOLCIENCIS.

"*Postscriptum.* Truly your golden chain hath not long abidden with me, and will now sustain, around the neck of an outlaw deer-stealer, the whistle wherewith he calleth on his hounds."

"What sayest thou to this, Conrade ?" said the Grand Master—"Den of thieves ! and a fit

residence is a den of thieves for such a Prior. No wonder that the hand of God is upon us, and that in the Holy Land we lose place by place, foot by foot, before the infidels, when we have such churchmen as this Aymer.—And what meaneth he, I trow, by this second Witch of Endor?" said he to his confidant, something apart.

Conrade was better acquainted (perhaps by practice) with the jargon of gallantry, than was his superior; and he expounded the passage which embarrassed the Grand Master, to be a sort of language used by worldly men towards those whom they loved *par amours;* but the explanation did not satisfy the bigotted Beaumanoir.

"There is more in it than thou doest guess, Conrade; thy simplicity is no match for this deep abyss of wickedness. This Rebecca of York was a pupil of that Miriam of whom thou hast heard. Thou shalt hear the Jew own it even now." Then turning to Isaac, he said aloud, "Thy daughter, then, is prisoner with Brian de Bois-Guilbert?"

"Ay, reverend valorous sir, and whatsoever

ransom a poor man may pay for her deliverance"——

"Peace!" said the Grand Master. "This thy daughter hath practised the art of healing, hath she not?"

"Ay, gracious sir; and knight and yeoman, squire and vassal, may bless the goodly gift which Heaven hath assigned to her. Many a one can testify that she hath recovered them by her art when every other human aid hath proved vain; but the blessing of the God of Jacob was upon her."

Beaumanoir turned to Mont-Fitchet with a grim smile. "See, brother," he said, "the deceptions of the devouring enemy! Behold the baits with which he fishes for souls, giving a poor space of earthly life in exchange for eternal happiness hereafter. Well said our blessed rule, *Semper percutiatur leo vorans.*—Upon the lion! Down with the destroyer!" said he, shaking aloft his mystic abacus, as if in defiance of the powers of darkness. "Thy daughter worketh the cures, I doubt not," thus he went on to address the Jew,

"by words and sigils, and periapts, and other cabalistical mysteries."

"Nay, reverend and brave Knight," answered Isaac, "but in chief measure by a balsam of marvellous virtue."

"Where had she that secret?" said Beaumanoir.

"It was delivered to her," answered Isaac, reluctantly, "by Miriam, a sage matron of our tribe."

"Ah, false Jew! was it from that witch Miriam, the abomination of whose enchantments have been heard of throughout every Christian land?" exclaimed the Grand Master, crossing himself. "Her body was burnt at a stake, and her ashes were scattered to the four winds; and so be it with me and mine Order, if I do not as much to her pupil, and more also! I will teach her to throw spell and incantation over the soldiers of the blessed Temple.—There, Damian, spurn this Jew from the gate—shoot him dead if he oppose or turn again. With his daughter we will deal as the Christian law and our own high office warrant."

Poor Isaac was hurried off accordingly; all his entreaties, and even his offers, unheard and disregarded. He could do no better than return to the house of the Rabbi, and endeavour, through his means, to learn how his daughter was to be disposed of. He had hitherto feared for her honour, he was now to tremble for her life. Meanwhile, the Grand Master ordered to his presence the Preceptor of Templestowe.

CHAPTER VI.

Say not my art is fraud—all live by seeming.
The beggar begs with it, and the gay courtier
Gains land and title, rank and rule, by seeming;
The clergy scorn it not, and the bold soldier
Will eke with it his service.—All admit it,
All practise it; and he who is content
With shewing what he is shall have small credit
In church, or camp, or state—So wags the world.

Old Play.

ALBERT MALVOISIN, President, or, in the language of the Order, Preceptor of the establishment of Templestowe, was brother to that Philip Malvoisin who has been already occasionally mentioned in this history, and was, like that baron, in close league with Brian de Bois-Guilbert.

Amongst dissolute and unprincipled men, of whom the Temple Order included but too many, Albert of Templestowe might be distinguished; but with this difference from the audacious Bois-Guilbert, that he knew how to throw over his vices and his ambition the veil of hypocrisy,

and to assume in his exterior the fanaticism which he internally despised. Had not the arrival of the Grand Master been so unexpectedly sudden, he would have seen nothing at Templestowe which might have seemed to argue any relaxation of discipline. And, even although surprised, and to a certain extent detected, Albert Malvoisin listened with such respect and apparent contrition to the rebuke of his Superior, and made such haste to reform the particulars he censured,—succeeded, in fine, so well in giving an air of ascetic devotion to a family which had been lately devoted to license and pleasure, that Lucas Beaumanoir began to entertain a higher opinion of the Preceptor's morals, than the first appearance of the establishment had inclined him to adopt.

But these favourable sentiments on the part of the Grand Master were greatly shaken by the intelligence that Albert had received within a house of religion the Jewish captive, and, as was to be feared, the paramour of a brother of the Order; and when Albert appeared before him, he was regarded with unwonted sternness.

"There is in this mansion, dedicated to the purposes of the holy Order of the Temple," said the Grand Master, in a severe tone, "a Jewish woman, brought hither by a brother of religion, by your connivance, Sir Preceptor."

Albert Malvoisin was overwhelmed with confusion; for the unfortunate Rebecca had been confined in a remote and secret part of the building, and every precaution used to prevent her residence there from being known. He read in the looks of Beaumanoir ruin to Bois-Guilbert and to himself, unless he should be able to avert the impending storm.

"Why are you mute?" continued the Grand Master.

"Is it permitted to me to reply?" answered the Preceptor, in a tone of the deepest humility, although by the question he only meant to give an instant's space for arranging his ideas.

"Speak, you are permitted," said the Grand master—"speak, and say, knowest thou the capital of our holy rule,—*De commilitonibus Templi in sancta civitate, qui cum miserimis mulieribus versantur, propter oblectationem carnis?*"

"Surely, most reverend father," answered the Preceptor, "I have not risen to this office in the Order, being ignorant of one of its most important prohibitions."

"How comes it then, I demand of thee once more, that thou hast suffered a brother to bring a paramour, and that paramour a Jewish sorceress, into this holy place, to the stain and pollution thereof?"

"A Jewish sorceress!" echoed Albert Malvoisin; "good angels guard us!"

"Ay, brother, a Jewish sorceress!—Darest thou deny that this Rebecca, the daughter of that wretched usurer Isaac of York, and the pupil of the foul witch Miriam, is now—shame to be thought or spoken!—lodged within this thy Preceptory?"

"Your wisdom, reverend father," answered the Preceptor, "hath rolled away the darkness from my understanding. Much did I wonder that so good a knight as Brian de Bois-Guilbert seemed so fondly besotted on the charms of this female, whom I received into this house merely to place a bar betwixt their growing intimacy, which else might have been cemented at the ex-

pence of the fall of our valiant and religious brother."

"Hath nothing, then, as yet passed betwixt them in breach of his vow?" demanded the Grand Master.

"What! under this roof?" said the Preceptor, crossing himself; "Saint Magdalene and the ten thousand virgins forbid!—No! if I have sinned in receiving her here, it was in the erring thought that I might thus break off our brother's besotted devotion to this Jewess, which seemed to me so wild and unnatural that I could not but ascribe it to some touch of insanity, more to be cured by pity than reproof. But since your reverend wisdom hath discovered this Jewish quean to be a sorceress, perchance it may account fully for his enamoured folly."

"It doth!—it doth!" said Beaumanoir; "see, brother Conrade, the peril of yielding to the first devices and blandishments of Satan! We look upon woman only to gratify the lust of the eye, and to take pleasure in what men call her beauty; and the Ancient Enemy obtains power over us, to complete, by talisman and spell, a work which was begun by idleness and folly. It may

be that our brother Bois-Guilbert does in this matter deserve rather pity than severe chastisement; rather the support of the staff, than the strokes of the rod; and that our admonitions and prayers may turn him from his folly, and restore him to his brethren."

"It were deep pity," said Conrade Mont-Fitchet, "to lose to the Order one of its best lances, when the Holy Community most requires the aid of its sons. Three hundred Saracens hath this Brian de Bois-Guilbert slain with his own hand."

"The blood of these accursed dogs," said the Grand Master, "shall be a sweet and acceptable offering to the saints and angels whom they despise and blaspheme; and with their aid will we counteract the spells and charms with which our brother is entwined as in a net. He shall burst the bands of this Dalilah, as Sampson burst the two new cords with which the Philistines had bound him, and shall slaughter the infidels, even heaps upon heaps. But concerning this foul witch, who hath flung her enchantments over a brother of the Holy Temple, assuredly she shall die the death."

"But the laws of England"—said the Preceptor, who, though delighted that the Grand Master's resentment, thus fortunately averted from himself and Bois-Guilbert, had taken another direction, began now to fear he was carrying it too far.

"The laws of England," said Beaumanoir, "permit and enjoin each judge to execute justice within his own jurisdiction. The most petty baron may arrest, try, and condemn a witch found within his own dominion. And shall that power be denied to the Grand Master of the Temple within a Preceptory of his Order?—No!—we will judge and condemn. The witch shall be taken out of the land, and the wickedness thereof shall be forgiven. Prepare the castle-hall for the trial of the sorceress."

Albert Malvoisin bowed and retired,—not to give directions for preparing the hall, but to seek out Brian de Bois-Guilbert, and communicate to him how matters were like to terminate. It was not long ere he found him foaming with indignation at a repulse he had of new sustained from the fair Jewess. "The unthinking," he said, "the

ungrateful, to scorn him who, amidst blood and flames, would have saved her life at the risk of his own. By Heaven, Malvoisin! I abode until roof and rafters crackled and crashed around me. I was the butt of an hundred arrows; they rattled on mine armour like hail-stones against a latticed casement, and the only use I made of my shield was for her protection. This did I endure for her; and now the self-willed girl upbraids me that I did not leave her to perish, and refuses me not only the slightest proof of gratitude, but even the most distant hopes that ever she will be brought to grant any. The devil, that possessed her race with obstinacy, has concentered its full force in her single person!"

"The devil," said the Preceptor, "I think possessed you both. How oft have I preached to you caution, if not continence? Did I not tell you that there were willing enough Christian damsels to be met with, who would think it sin to refuse so brave a knight *le don d'amoureux merci?* and you must needs anchor your affection on a wilful, obstinate Jewess? By the mass, I

think old Lucas Beaumanoir guesses right, when he maintains she hath cast a spell over you."

"Lucas Beaumanoir?" said Bois-Guilbert,—"Are these your precautions, Malvoisin? Hast thou suffered the dotard to learn that Rebecca is in the Preceptory?"

"How could I help it?" said the Preceptor. "I neglected nothing that could keep secret your mystery; but it is betrayed, and whether by the devil or no, the devil only can tell. But I have turned the matter as I could; you are safe if you renounce Rebecca. You are pitied—the victim of magical delusion. She is a sorceress, and must suffer as such."

"She shall not, by Heaven!" said Bois-Guilbert.

"By Heaven, she must and will!" said Malvoisin. "Neither you nor any one else can save her. Lucas Beaumanoir hath settled that the death of a Jewess will be a sin-offering sufficient to atone for all the amorous indulgences of the Knights Templars; and thou knowest he hath both the power and will to execute so reasonable and pious a purpose."

"Will future ages believe that such stupid bigotry ever existed?" said Bois-Guilbert, striding up and down the apartment.

"What they may believe, I know not," said Malvoisin, calmly; "but I know well, that in this our day clergy and laymen, take ninety-nine to the hundred, will cry *amen* to the Grand Master's sentence."

"I have it," said Bois-Guilbert. "Albert, thou art my friend. Thou must connive at her escape, Malvoisin, and I will transport her to some place of greater security and secrecy."

"I cannot, if I would," replied the Preceptor; "the mansion is filled with the attendants of the Grand Master, and others who are devoted to him. And, to be frank with you, brother, I would not embark with you in this matter, even if I could hope to bring my bark to haven. I have risked enough already for your sake. I have no mind to encounter the risk of degradation, or even to lose my Preceptory, for the sake of a painted piece of Jewish flesh and blood. And you, if you will be guided by my counsel, will

give up this wild-goose chase, and fly your hawk at some other game. Think, Bois-Guilbert,—thy present rank, thy future honours, all depend on thy place in the Order. Shouldst thou adhere perversely to thy passion for this Rebecca, thou wilt give Beaumanoir the power of expelling thee, and he will not neglect it. He is jealous of the truncheon which he holds in his trembling gripe, and he knows thou stretchest thy bold hand towards it. Doubt not he will ruin thee, if thou affordest him a pretext so fair as thy protection of a Jewish sorceress. Give him his scope in this matter, for thou canst not controul him. When the staff is in thine own firm grasp, thou mayest caress the daughters of Judah, or burn them, as may best suit thine own humour."

"Malvoisin," said Bois-Guilbert, "thou art a cold-blooded"——

"Friend," said the Preceptor, hastening to fill up the blank, in which Bois-Guilbert would probably have placed a worse word,—"a cold-blooded friend I am, and therefore more fit to give thee advice. I tell thee once more, that thou canst

not save Rebecca. I tell thee once more, thou canst but perish with her. Go hie thee to the Grand Master—throw thyself at his feet and tell him"——

"Not at his feet, by Heaven! but to the dotard's very beard will I say"——

"Say to him then to his beard," continued Malvoisin, coolly, "that you love this captive Jewess to distraction; and the more thou dost enlarge on thy passion, the greater will be his haste to end it by the death of the fair enchantress; while thou, taken in flagrant delict in the avowal of a crime contrary to thine oath, canst hope no aid of thy brethren, and must exchange all thy brilliant visions of ambition and power, to lift perhaps a mercenary spear in some of the petty quarrels between Flanders and Burgundy."

"Thou speakest the truth, Malvoisin," said Brian de Bois-Guilbert, after a moment's reflection. "I will give the hoary bigot no advantage over me; and for Rebecca, she hath not merited at my hand that I should expose rank and honour for her sake. I will cast her off—yes, I will leave her to her fate, unless"——

"Qualify not thy wise and necessary resolution," said Malvoisin; "women are but the toys which amuse our lighter hours—ambition is the serious business of life—Perish a thousand such frail baubles as this Jewess, before thy manly step pause in the brilliant career that lies stretched before thee! For the present we part, nor must we be seen to hold close conversation—I must order the hall for his judgment-seat."

"What," said Bois-Guilbert, "so soon?"

"Ay," replied the Preceptor, "trial moves rapidly on when the judge has determined the sentence beforehand."——

"Rebecca," said Bois-Guilbert, when he was left alone, "thou art like to cost me dear—Why cannot I abandon thee to thy fate as this calm hypocrite recommends?—One effort will I make to save thee—but beware of ingratitude, for if I am again repulsed, my vengeance shall equal my love. The life and honour of Bois-Guilbert must not be hazarded, where contempt and reproaches are his only reward."

The Preceptor had hardly given the necessary orders, when he was joined by Conrade Mont-

Fitchit, who acquainted him with the Grand Master's resolution to bring the Jewess to instant trial for sorcery.

"It is surely a dream," said the Preceptor; "we have many Jewish physicians, and we call them not wizards though they work wonderful cures."

"The Grand Master thinks otherwise," said Mont-Fitchit; "and, Albert, I will be upright with thee—wizard or not, it were better that this miserable damsel die, than that Brian de Bois-Guilbert should be lost to the Order, or the Order divided by internal dissention. Thou knowest his high rank, his fame in arms—thou knowest the zeal with which many of our brethren regard him—but all this will not avail him with our Grand Master, should he consider Brian as the accomplice, not the victim, of this Jewess. Were the souls of the twelve tribes in her single body, it were better she suffered alone, than that Bois-Guilbert were partner in her destruction."

"I have been working him even now to abandon her," said Malvoisin; "but still, are there grounds enough to condemn this Rebecca for

sorcery?—Will not the Grand Master change his mind when he sees that the proofs are so weak?"

"They must be strengthened, Albert," replied Mont-Fitchit, "they must be strengthened. Dost thou understand me?"

"I do," said the Preceptor, "nor do I scruple to do aught for advancement of the Order—but there is little time to find engines fitting."

"Malvoisin, they must be found," said Conrade; "well will it advantage both the Order and thee. This Templestowe is a poor Preceptory—that of Maison-Dieu is worth double its value—thou knowest my interest with our old Chief—find those who can carry this matter through, and thou art Preceptor of Maison-Dieu in the fertile Kent—How sayest thou?"

"There is," replied Malvoisin, "among those who come hither with Bois-Guilbert, two fellows whom I well know; servants they were to my brother Philip de Malvoisin, and passed from his service to that of Front-de-Bœuf—It may be they know something of the witcheries of this woman."

"Away, seek them out instantly—and hark

thee, if a bezant or two will sharpen their memory, let it not be wanting."

"They would swear the mother that bore them a sorceress for a zecchin," said the Preceptor.

"Away then," said Mont-Fitchit; "at noon the affair will proceed. I have not seen our senior in such earnest preparation since he condemned to the stake Hamet Alfagi, a convert who relapsed to the Moslem faith."

The ponderous castle-bell had tolled the point of noon, when Rebecca heard a trampling of feet upon the private stair which led to her place of confinement. The noise announced the arrival of several persons, and the circumstance rather gave her joy; for she was more afraid of the solitary visits of the fierce and passionate Bois-Guilbert than of any evil that could befal her besides. The door of the chamber was unlocked, and Conrade and the Preceptor Malvoisin entered, attended with four warders clothed in black, and bearing halberts.

"Daughter of an accursed race!" said the Preceptor, "arise and follow us."

"Whither," said Rebecca, "and for what purpose?"

"Damsel," answered Conrade, "it is not for thee to question, but to obey. Nevertheless, be it known to thee, that thou art to be brought before the tribunal of the Grand Master of our holy Order, there to answer for thine offences."

"May the God of Abraham be praised!" said Rebecca, folding her hands devoutly; "the name of a judge, though an enemy to my people, is to me as the name of a protector. Most willingly do I follow thee—permit me only to wrap my veil around my head."

They descended the stair with slow and solemn step, traversed a long gallery, and, by a folding pair of doors placed at the end, entered the great hall in which the Grand Master had for the time established his court of justice.

The lower part of this ample apartment was filled with squires and yeomen, who made way not without some difficulty for Rebecca, attended by the Preceptor and Mont-Fitchet, and followed by the guard of halberdiers, to move forward to

the seat appointed for her. As she passed through the crowd, her arms folded and her head depressed, a scrap of paper was thrust into her hand which she received almost unconsciously, and continued to hold without examining its contents. The assurance that she possessed some friend in this awful assembly gave her courage to look around, and to mark into whose presence she had been conducted. She gazed accordingly upon the scene which we shall endeavour to describe in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

> Stern was the law, which bade its vot'ries leave
> At human woes with human hearts to grieve;
> Stern was the law, which at the winning wile
> Of frank and harmless mirth forbade to smile;
> But sterner still, when high the iron-rod
> Of tyrant power she shook, and call'd that power of God.
>
> *The Middle Ages.*

The tribunal, erected for the trial of the innocent and unhappy Rebecca, occupied the dais or elevated part of the upper end of the great hall—a platform, which we have already described as the place of honour, destined to be occupied by the most distinguished inhabitants or guests of an ancient mansion.

On an elevated seat, directly before the accused, sate the Grand Master of the Temple, in full and ample robes of flowing white, holding in his hand

the mystic staff, which bore the symbol of the Order. At his feet was placed a table, occupied by two scribes, chaplains of the Order, whose duty it was to reduce to formal record the proceedings of the day. The black dresses, bare scalps, and demure looks of these churchmen, formed a strong contrast to the warlike appearance of the knights who attended, either as residing in the Preceptory, or as come thither to attend upon their Grand Master. The Preceptors, of whom there were four present, occupied seats lower in height, and somewhat drawn back behind that of their superior; and the Knights, who enjoyed no such rank in the Order, were placed on benches still lower, and preserving the same distance from the Preceptors as these from the Grand Master. Behind them, but still upon the dais or elevated portion of the hall, stood the Esquires of the Order, in white dresses of an inferior quality.

The whole assembly wore an aspect of the most profound gravity; and in the aspect of the knights might be perceived traces of military daring, united with the solemn carriage becoming

men of religious professions, and which in the presence of their Grand Master failed not to sit upon every brow.

The remaining and lower part of the hall was filled with guards, holding partizans, and with other attendants whom curiosity had drawn thither, to see at once a Grand Master and a Jewish sorceress. By far the greater part of those inferior persons were, in one rank or other, connected with the Order, and were accordingly distinguished by their black dresses. But peasants from the neighbouring country were not refused admittance; for it was the pride of Beaumanoir to render the edifying spectacle of the justice which he administered as public as possible. His large blue eyes seemed to expand as he gazed around the assembly, and his countenance appeared elated by the conscious dignity and imaginary merit of the part which he was about to perform. A psalm, which he himself accompanied with a deep mellow voice, which age had not deprived of its powers, commenced the proceedings of the day; and the solemn sounds, *Venite exultemus Domino*, so often sung by the Templars before engaging with

earthly adversaries, was judged by Lúcas most appropriate to introduce the approaching triumph, for such he deemed it, over the powers of darkness. The long prolonged notes, raised by an hundred masculine voices accustomed to combine in the choral chaunt, arose to the vaulted roof of the hall, and rolled on amongst its arches with the pleasing yet solemn sound of the rushing of mighty waters.

When the sounds ceased, the Grand Master glanced his eye slowly around the circle, and observed that the seat of one of the Preceptors was vacant. Brian de Bois-Guilbert, by whom it had been occupied, had left his place, and was now standing near the extreme corner of one of the benches occupied by the Knights Companions of the Temple, one hand extending his long mantle, so as in some degree to hide his face; while the other held his cross-handled sword, with the point of which, sheathed as it was, he was slowly drawing lines upon the oaken floor.

"Unhappy man!" said the Grand Master, after favouring him with a glance of compassion. "Thou seest, Conrade, how this holy work dis-

tresses him. To this can the light look of woman, aided by the Prince of the powers of this world, bring a valiant and worthy knight!—Seest thou he cannot look upon us; he cannot look upon her; and who knows by what impulse from his tormentor his hand forms these cabalistic lines upon the floor?—It may be our life and safety are thus aimed at; but we spit and defy the foul enemy.—*Semper Leo percutiatur.*"

This was communicated apart to his confidential follower, Conrade Mont-Fitchet. The Grand Master then raised his voice, and addressed the assembly.

"Reverend and valiant men, Knights, Preceptors, and Companions of this Holy Order, my brethren and my children!—you also, well-born and pious Esquires, who aspire to wear this holy Cross!—and you also, Christian brethren, of every degree!—Be it known to you, that it is not defect of power in us which hath occasioned the assembling of this congregation; for, however unworthy in our person, yet to us is committed, with this batton, full power to judge and to try all that regards the weal of this our holy Order. Holy Saint Bernard, in

the rule of our knightly and religious profession, hath said, in the fifty-ninth capital,* that he would not that brethren be called together in council, save at the will and command of the Master; leaving it free to us, as to those more worthy fathers who have preceded us in this our office, to judge, as well of the occasion as of the time and place in which a chapter of the whole Order, or of any part thereof, may be convoked. Also, in all such chapters, it is our duty to hear the advice of our brethren, and to proceed according to our own pleasure. But when the raging wolf hath made an inroad upon the flock, and carried off one member thereof, it is the duty of the kind shepherd to call his comrades together, that with bows and slings they may quell the invader, according to our well-known rule, that the lion is ever to be beaten down. We have therefore, summoned to our presence a Jewish woman, by name Rebecca, daughter of

* The reader is referred to the Rules of the Poor Military Brotherhood of the Temple, which occur in the Works of St Bernard.—L. T.

Isaac of York—a woman infamous for sortileges and for witcheries; whereby she hath maddened the blood and besotted the brain, not of a churl, but of a Knight—not of a secular Knight, but of one devoted to the service of the Holy Temple—not of a Knight Companion, but of a Preceptor of our Order, first in honour as in place. Our brother Brian de Bois-Guilbert is well known to ourselves, and to all degrees who now hear me, as a true and zealous champion of the Cross, by whose arm many deeds of valour have been wrought in the Holy Land, and the holy places purified from pollution by the blood of those infidels who defiled them. Neither have our brother's sagacity and prudence been less patent to his brethren than his valour and discipline; in so much, that knights, both in eastern and western lands, have named De Bois-Guilbert as one who may well be put in nomination as successor to this batton, when it shall please Heaven to release us from the toil of bearing it. If we were told that such a man, so honoured, and so honourable, suddenly casting away regard for his character, his vows, his brethren, and his pro-

spects, had associated to himself a Jewish damsel, wandered in this lewd company through solitary places, defended her person in preference to his own, and, finally, was so utterly blinded and besotted by his folly, as to bring her even to one of our own Preceptories, what should we say but that the noble knight was possessed by some evil demon, or influenced by some wicked spell?—If we could suppose it otherwise, think not rank, valour, high repute, or any earthly consideration, should prevent us from visiting him with punishment, that the evil thing might be removed, even according to the text, *Auferte malum ex vobis.* For various and heinous are the acts of transgression against the rule of our blessed Order in this lamentable history.—1st, He hath walked according to his proper will, contrary to capital 33, *Quod nullus juxta propriam voluntatem incedat.*—2d, He hath held communication with an excommunicated person, capital 57, *Ut fratres non participent cum excommunicatis*, and therefore hath a portion in *Anathema Maranatha.*—3d, He hath conversed with strange women, contrary to the capital, *Ut fratres non conversantur cum extraneis mulieribus.*—4th, He hath

not avoided, nay he hath, it is to be feared, solicited, the kiss of woman; by which, saith the last rule of our renowned Order, *Ut Fugiantur oscula*, the soldiers of the Cross are brought into a snare. For which heinous and multiplied guilt, Brian de Bois-Guilbert should be cut off and cast out from our congregation, were he the right hand and right eye thereof."

He paused. A low murmur went through the assembly. Some of the younger part, who had been inclined to smile at the statute *De osculis fugiendis*, became now grave enough, and anxiously waited what the Grand Master was next to propose.

"Such," he said, "and so great should indeed be the punishment of a Knight Templar, who wilfully offended against the rules of his Order in such weighty points. But if, by means of charms and of spells, Satan had obtained dominion over the Knight, perchance because he cast his eyes too lightly upon a damsel's beauty, we are then rather to lament than chastise his backsliding; and, imposing on him only such penance as may purify him from his iniquity, we are to turn the full edge of our indignation upon

the accursed instrument, which had so well nigh occasioned his utter falling away. Stand forth, therefore, and bear witness, ye who have witnessed these unhappy doings, that we may judge of the sum and bearing thereof; and judge whether our justice may be satisfied with the punishment of this infidel woman, or, if we must proceed, with a bleeding heart, to the further proceeding against our brother."

Several witnesses were called upon to prove the risks to which Bois-Guilbert exposed himself in endeavouring to save Rebecca from the blazing castle, and his neglect of his personal defence in attending to her safety. The men gave these details with the exaggerations common to vulgar minds which have been strongly excited by any remarkable event, and their natural disposition to the marvellous was greatly increased by the satisfaction which their evidence seemed to afford to the eminent person for whose information it had been delivered. Thus the dangers which Bois-Guilbert surmounted, in themselves sufficiently great, became portentous in their narrative. The devotion of the knight to Rebecca's defence was

exaggerated beyond the bounds, not only of discretion, but even of the most frantic excess of chivalrous zeal; and his deference to what she said, though her language was often severe and upbraiding, was painted as carried to an excess, which, in a man of his haughty temper, seemed well nigh preternatural.

The Preceptor of Templestowe was then called on to describe the manner in which Bois-Guilbert and the Jewess arrived at the Preceptory. The evidence of Malvoisin was skilfully guarded. But while he apparently studied to spare the feelings of Bois-Guilbert, he threw in, from time to time, such hints, as seemed to infer that he laboured under some temporary alienation of mind, so deeply did he seem to be enamoured of the damsel whom he brought along with him. With sighs of penitence, the Preceptor avowed his own contrition for having admitted Rebecca and her lover within the walls of the Preceptory—"But my defence," he concluded, "has been made in my confession to our most reverend father the Grand Master; he knows my motives were not evil, though my conduct may have been irregular.

Joyfully will I submit to any penance he shall assign me."

"Thou hast spoken well, Brother Albert," said Beaumanoir, ; "thy motives were good, since thou didst judge it right to stop thine erring brother in his career of precipitate folly. But thy conduct was wrong; as he that would stop a runaway steed, and seizing by the stirrup instead of the bridle, receives injury himself instead of accomplishing his purpose. Thirteen pater-nosters are assigned by our pious founder for matins, and nine for vespers; be those services doubled by thee. Thrice a-week are Templars permitted the use of flesh; but do thou keep fast for all the seven days. This do for six weeks to come, and thy penance is accomplished."

With a hypocritical look of the deepest submission, the Preceptor of Templestowe bowed to the ground before his Superior, and resumed his seat.

"Were it not well, brethren," said the Grand Master, "that we examine something into the former life and conversation of this woman, specially that we may discover whether she be one likely

to use magical charms and spells, since the truths which we have heard may well incline us to suppose, that in this unhappy course our erring brother has been acted upon by some infernal enticement and delusion?"

Herman of Goodalricke was the fourth Preceptor present; the other three were Conrade, Malvoisin, and Bois-Guilbert himself. Herman was an ancient warrior, whose face was marked with scars inflicted by the sabre of the Moslemah, and had great rank and consideration among his brethren. He arose and bowed to the Grand Master, who instantly granted him licence of speech. "I would crave to know, most Reverend Father, of our valiant brother, Brian de Bois-Guilbert, what he says to these wondrous accusations, and with what eye he himself now regards his unhappy intercourse with this Jewish maiden?"

"Brian de Bois-Guilbert," said the Grand Master, "thou hearest the question which our Brother of Goodalricke desirest thou shouldest answer. I command thee to reply to him."

Bois-Guilbert turned his head towards the

Grand Master when thus addressed, and remained silent.

"He is possessed by a dumb devil," said the Grand Master. "Avoid thee, Sathanas!—Speak, Brian de-Bois-Guilbert, I conjure thee, by this symbol of our Holy Order."

Bois-Guilbert made an effort to suppress his rising scorn and indignation, the expression of which, he was well aware, would have little availed him. "Brian de Bois-Guilbert," he answered, "replies not, most Reverend Father, to such wild and vague charges. If his honour be impeached, he will defend it with his body, and with that sword which has often fought for Christendom."

"We forgive thee, Brother Brian," said the Grand Master. "That thou hast boasted thy warlike achievements before us, is a glorifying of thine own deeds, and cometh of the Enemy, who tempteth us to exalt our own worship. But thou hast our pardon, judging thou speakest less of thine own suggestion than from the impulse of him whom, by Heaven's leave, we will quell and drive forth from our assembly." A glance of

disdain flashed from the dark fierce eyes of Bois-Guilbert, but he made no reply.—" And now," pursued the Grand Master, " since our Brother of Goodalricke's question has been thus imperfectly answered, pursue we our quest, brethren, and, with our patron's assistance, we will search to the bottom this mystery of iniquity. Let those who have aught to witness of the life and conversation of this Jewish woman, stand forth before us." There was a bustle in the lower part of the Hall, and when the Grand Master inquired the reason, it was replied, there was in the crowd a bed-ridden man, whom the prisoner had restored to the perfect use of his limbs, by a miraculous balsam.

The poor peasant, a Saxon by birth, was dragged forward to the bar, terrified at the penal consequences which he might have incurred by the guilt of having been cured of the palsy by a Jewish damsel. Perfectly cured he certainly was not, for he supported himself forward on crutches to give evidence. Most unwilling was his testimony, and given with many tears; but he admitted that two years since, when residing at

York, he was suddenly afflicted with a sore disease, while labouring for Isaac the rich Jew, in his vocation of a joiner; that he had been unable to stir from his bed until the remedies applied by Rebecca's directions, and specially a warming and spicy-smelling balsam had in some degree restored him to the use of his limbs. Moreover, he said she had given him a pot of that precious ointment, and furnished him with a piece of money withal, to return to the house of his father, near to Templestowe. "And may it please your gracious Reverence," said the man, "I cannot think the damsel meant harm by me, though she hath the ill hap to be a Jewess; for even when I used her remedy, I said the Pater and the Creed, and it never operated a whit less kindly."

"Peace, slave," said the Grand Master, "and be gone. It well suits brutes like thee to be tampering and trinketting with hellish cures, and to be giving your labour to the sons of misbelief. I tell thee, the fiend can impose diseases for the very purpose of removing them, in order to bring into credit some diabolical fashion of cure. Hast thou that unguent of which thou speakest?"

The peasant, fumbling in his bosom with a trembling hand, produced a small box, bearing some Hebrew characters on the lid, which was, with most of the audience, a sure proof that the devil had stood apothecary. Beaumanoir, after crossing himself, took the box into his hand, and, learned in most of the Eastern tongues, read with ease the motto on the lid,—*The lion of the tribe of Judah hath conquered.* "Strange powers of Sathanas," said he, "which can convert Scripture into blasphemy, mingling poison with our necessary food!—Is there no leech here who can tell us the ingredients of this mystic unguent?"

Two mediciners, as they called themselves, the one a monk, the other a barber, appeared and avouched they knew nothing of the materials, excepting that they savoured of myrrh and camphire, which they took to be oriental herbs. But with the true professional hatred to a successful practitioner of their art, they insinuated that, since the medicine was beyond their own knowledge, it must necessarily have been compounded from an unlawful and magical pharmacopeia; since they themselves, though no conjurers, fully un-

derstood every branch of their art, so far as it might be exercised with the good faith of a Christian. When this medical research was ended, the Saxon peasant desired humbly to have back the medicine which he had found so salutary; but the Grand Master frowned severely at the request. "What is thy name, fellow?" said he to the cripple.

"Higg, the son of Snell," answered the peasant.

"Then Higg, son of Snell," said the Grand Master, "I tell thee it is better to be bed-ridden, than to accept the benefit of unbelievers' medicine that thou mayest arise and walk; better to despoil infidels of their treasure by the strong hand, than to accept of them benevolent gifts, or do them service for wages. Go, thou, and do as I have said."

"Alack," said the peasant, "an it shall not displease your Reverence, the lesson comes too late for me, for I am but a maimed man; but I will tell my two brethren, who serve the rich Rabbi Nathan Ben Samuel, that your Mastership

says it is more lawful to rob him than to render him faithful service."

"Out with the prating villain!" said Beaumanoir, who was not prepared to refute this practical application of his general maxim.

Higg, the son of Snell, withdrew into the crowd, but, interested in the fate of his benefactress, lingered until he should learn her doom, even at the risk of again encountering the frown of that severe judge, the terror of which withered his very heart within him.

At this period of the trial, the Grand Master commanded Rebecca to unveil herself. Opening her lips for the first time, she replied patiently, but with dignity,—"That it was not the wont of the daughters of her people to uncover their faces when alone in an assembly of strangers." The sweet tones of her voice, and the softness of her reply, impressed on the audience a sentiment of pity and sympathy. But Beaumanoir, in whose mind the suppression of each feeling of humanity which could interfere with his imagined duty, was a virtue of itself, repeated his commands that his victim should be unveiled. The guards

were about to remove her veil accordingly, when she stood up before the Grand Master and said, "Nay, but for the love of your own daughters —Alas," she said, recollecting herself, "ye have no daughters!—but for the remembrance of your mothers—for the love of your sisters, and of female decency, let me not be thus handled in your presence; it suits not a maiden to be disrobed by such rude grooms. I will obey you," she added, with an expression of patient sorrow in her voice, which had almost melted the heart of Beaumanoir himself; "ye are elders among your people, and at your command I will shew the features of an ill-fated maiden."

She withdrew her veil, and looked on them with a countenance in which bashfulness contended with dignity. Her exceeding beauty excited a murmur of surprise, and the younger knights told each other with their eyes, in silent correspondence, that Brian's best apology was in the power of her real charms, rather than of her imaginary witchcraft. But Higg, the son of Snell, felt most deeply the effect produced by the sight of the countenance of his benefactress. "Let me

go forth," he said, to the warders at the door of the Hall—"let me go forth!—To look at her again will kill me, as I have had a share in murthering her."

"Peace, poor man," said Rebecca, when she heard his exclamation; "thou hast done me no harm by speaking the truth—thou canst not aid me by thy complaints or lamentations. Peace, I pray thee—go home and save thyself."

Higg was about to be thrust out by the compassion of the warders, who were apprehensive lest his clamorous grief should draw upon them reprehension, and upon himself punishment. But he promised to be silent, and was permitted to remain. The two men-at-arms, with whom Albert Malvoisin had not failed to communicate upon the import of their testimony, were now called forward. Though both were hardened and inflexible villains, the sight of the captive maiden, as well as her exceeding beauty, at the first appeared to stagger them; but an expressive glance from the Preceptor of Templestowe restored them to their dogged composure; and they delivered, with a precision which would have seemed suspi-

cious to more favourable judges, circumstances either altogether fictitious or trivial, and natural in themselves, but rendered pregnant with suspicion by the exaggerated manner in which they were told, and the sinister commentary which the witnesses added to the facts. The circumstances of their evidence would have been, in modern days, divided into two classes—those which were immaterial, and those which were actually and physically impossible. But both were, in those ignorant and superstitious times, easily credited as proofs of guilt.—The first class set forth, that Rebecca was heard to mutter to herself in an unknown tongue—that the songs she sung by fits were of a strangely sweet sound, which made the ears of the hearer tingle, and his heart throb—that she spoke at times to herself, and seemed to look upward for a reply—that her garments were of a strange and mystic form, unlike those of women of good repute—that she had rings impressed with cabalistical devices, and that strange characters were broidered on her veil.

All these circumstances, so natural and so trivial, were gravely listened to as proofs, or, at

least, as affording strong suspicions that Rebecca had unlawful correspondence with mystical powers.

But there was less equivocal testimony, which the credulity of the assembly, or of the greater part, greedily swallowed, however incredible. One of the soldiers had seen her work a cure upon a wounded man, brought with them to the Castle of Torquilstone. She did, he said, make certain signs upon the wound, and repeated certain mysterious words, which he blessed God he understood not, when the iron head of a square cross-bow bolt disengaged itself from the wound, the bleeding was staunched, the wound was closed, and the dying man was, within the quarter of an hour, walking upon the ramparts, and assisting the witness in managing a mangonal, or machine for hurling stones. This legend was probably founded upon the fact, that Rebecca had attended on the wounded Ivanhoe when in the castle of Torquilstone. But it was the more difficult to dispute the accuracy of the witness, as, in order to produce real evidence in support of his verbal testimony, he drew from pouch the very bolt-head, which, according to

his story, had been miraculously extracted from the wound; and as the iron weighed a full ounce, it completely confirmed the tale, however marvellous.

His comrade had been a witness from a neighbouring battlement of the scene betwixt Rebecca and Bois-Guilbert, when she was upon the point of precipitating herself from the top of the tower. Not to be behind his companion, this fellow stated, that he had seen Rebecca perch herself upon the parapet of the turret, and there take the form of a milk-white swan, under which appearance she flitted three times round the castle of Torquilstone; then again settle on the turret, and once more assume the female form.

Less than one half of this weighty evidence would have been sufficient to convict any old woman, poor and ugly, even though she had not been a Jewess. United with that fatal circumstance, the body of proof was too weighty for Rebecca's youth, even when united with the most exquisite beauty.

The Grand Master had collected the suffrages, and now in a solemn tone demanded of Rebecca

what she had to say against the sentence of condemnation, which he was about to pronounce.

"To invoke your pity," said the lovely Jewess, with a voice somewhat tremulous with emotion, "would, I am aware, be as useless as I should hold it mean. To state that to relieve the sick and wounded of another religion, cannot be displeasing to the acknowledged Founder of both our faiths, were also unavailing; to plead that many things which these men (whom may Heaven pardon!) have spoken against me are impossible, would avail me but little, since you believe in their possibility; and still less would it advantage me to explain, that the peculiarities of my dress, language, and manners, are those of my people—I had well nigh said of my country, but alas! we have no country. Nor will I even vindicate myself at the expence of my oppressor, who stands there listening to the fictions and surmises which seem to convert the tyrant into the victim.—God be judge between him and me! but rather would I submit to ten such deaths as your pleasure may denounce against me, than listen to the suit which that man of Belial has urged

upon me—friendless, defenceless, and his prisoner. But he is of your own faith, and his lightest affirmance would weigh down the most solemn protestations of the distressed Jewess. I will not therefore return to himself the charge brought against me—but to himself—Yes, Brian de Bois-Guilbert, to thyself I appeal, whether these accusations are not false? as monstrous and calumnious as they are deadly?"

There was a pause; all eyes turned to Brian de Bois-Guilbert. He was silent.

"Speak," she said, "if thou art a man—if thou art a Christian, speak!—I conjure thee, by the habit which thou dost wear, by the name thou dost inherit—by the knighthood thou dost vaunt—by the honour of thy mother—by the tomb and the bones of thy father—I conjure thee to say, are these things true?"

"Answer her, brother," said the Grand Master, "if the Enemy with whom thou dost wrestle will give thee power."

In fact, Bois-Guilbert seemed agitated by contending passions, which almost convulsed his fea-

tures, and it was with a constrained voice that at last he replied, looking to Rebecca,—"The scroll!—the scroll!"

"Ay," said Beaumanoir, "this is indeed testimony—the victim of her witcheries can only name the fatal scroll, the spell inscribed on which is, doubtless, the cause of his silence."

But Rebecca put another interpretation on the words extorted as it were from Bois-Guilbert, and glancing her eye upon the slip of parchment which she continued to hold in her hand, she read written thereupon in the Arabian character, *Demand a Champion!* The murmuring commentary which ran through the assembly at the strange reply of Bois-Guilbert, gave Rebecca leisure to examine and instantly to destroy the scroll, as she thought unobserved. When the whisper had ceased, the Grand Master spoke.

"Rebecca, thou canst derive no benefit from the evidence of this unhappy knight, for whom, as we well perceive, the Enemy is yet too powe - ful. Hast thou aught else to say?"

"There is yet one chance of life left to me,"

said Rebecca, " even by your own fierce laws. Life has been miserable—miserable, at least, of late—but I will not cast away the gift of God, while he affords me the means of defending it. I deny this charge—I maintain my innocence, and I declare the falsehood of this accusation—I challenge the privilege of trial by combat, and will appear by my champion."

" And who, Rebecca," replied the Grand Master, " will lay lance in rest for a sorceress?—who will be the champion of a Jewess?"

" God will raise me up a champion," said Rebecca—" It cannot be that in merry England—the hospitable, the generous, the free, where so many are ready to peril their lives for honour, there shall not be found one to fight for justice. But it is enough that I challenge the trial by combat—there lies my gage."

She took her embroidered glove from her hand, and flung it down before the Grand Master with an air of mingled simplicity and dignity, which excited universal surprise and admiration.

CHAPTER VIII.

——— There I throw my gage,
To prove it on thee to the extremest point
Of martial daring.

Richard II.

Even Lucas Beaumanoir himself was affected by the mien and appearance of Rebecca. He was not originally a cruel or even a severe man; but with passions by nature cold, and with a high, though mistaken, sense of duty, his heart had been gradually hardened by the ascetic life which he pursued, the supreme power which he enjoyed, and the supposed necessity of subduing infidelity and eradicating heresy, which he conceived peculiarly incumbent on him. His features relaxed in their usual severity as he gazed upon the beautiful creature before him, alone, unfriended, and defending herself with so much spirit

and courage. He crossed himself twice, as doubting whence arose the unwonted softening of a heart, which on such occasions used to resemble in hardness the steel of his sword. At length he spoke.

" Damsel," he said, " if the pity I feel for thee arise from any practice thine evil arts have made on me, great is thy guilt. But I rather judge it the kinder feelings of nature which grieves that so goodly a form should be a vessel of perdition. Repent, my daughter—confess thy witchcrafts—turn thee from thine evil faith—embrace this holy emblem, and all shall yet be well with thee here and hereafter. In some sisterhood of the strictest order, shalt thou have time for prayer and fitting penance, and that repentance not to be repented of. This do and live—what has the law of Moses done for thee that thou shouldest die for it?"

" It was the law of my fathers," said Rebecca; " it was delivered in thunders and in storms upon the mountain of Sinai, in cloud and in fire. This, if ye are Christians, ye believe—it is, you say, recalled, but so my teachers have not taught me."

"Let our chaplain," said Beaumanoir, "stand forth, and tell this obstinate infidel"——

"Forgive the interruption," said Rebecca, meekly; "I am a maiden, unskilled to dispute for my religion, but I can die for it, if it be God's will.—Let me pray your answer to my demand of a champion."

"Give me her glove," said Beaumanoir. "This is indeed," he continued, as he looked at the flimsy texture and slender fingers, "a slight and frail gage for a purpose so deadly—Seest thou, Rebecca, as this thin and light glove of thine is to one of our heavy steel gauntlets, so is thy cause to that of the Temple, for it is our Order which thou hast defied."

"Cast my innocence into the scale," answered Rebecca, "and the glove of silk shall outweigh the glove of iron."

"Then thou doest persist in thy refusal to confess thy guilt, and in that bold challenge which thou hast made?"

"I do persist, noble sir," answered Rebecca.

"So be it then, in the name of Heaven," said

the Grand Master; "and may God shew the right!"

"Amen," replied the Preceptors around him, and the word was deeply echoed by the whole assembly.

"Brethren," said Beaumanoir, "you are aware that we might well have refused to this woman the benefit of the trial by combat—but though a Jewess and an unbeliever, she is also a stranger and defenceless, and God forbid that she should ask the benefit of our mild laws, and that it should be refused to her. Moreover, we are knights and soldiers as well as men of religion, and shame it were to us, upon any pretence, to refuse proffered combat. Thus, therefore, stands the case. Rebecca, the daughter of Isaac of York, is by many frequent and suspicious circumstances, defamed of sorcery practised on the person of a noble knight of our holy Order, and hath challenged the combat in proof of her innocence. To whom, reverend brethren, is it your opinion that we should deliver the gage of battle, naming him, at the same time, to be our champion on the field?"

" To Brian de Bois-Guilbert, whom it chiefly concerns," said the Preceptor of Goodalricke, " and who, moreover, best knows how the truth stands in this matter."

" But if," said the Grand Master, " our brother Brian be under the influence of a charm or a spell—we speak but for the sake of precaution, for to the arm of none of our holy Order would we more willingly confide this or a more weighty cause."

" Reverend father," answered the Preceptor of Goodalricke, " no spell can affect the champion who comes forward to fight for the judgment of God."

" Thou say'st right, brother," said the Grand Master. " Albert Malvoisin, give this gage of battle to Brian de Bois-Guilbert.—It is our charge to thee, brother," he continued, addressing himself to Bois-Guilbert, " that thou do thy battle manfully, nothing doubting that the good cause shall triumph.—And do thou, Rebecca, attend, that we assign thee the third day from the present to find a champion."

" That is but brief space," answered Rebecca,

"for a stranger, and one of another faith, to find one who will do battle, wagering life and honour for her cause."

"We may not extend it," answered the Grand Master; "the field must be foughten in our own presence, and divers weighty causes call us on the fourth day from hence."

"God's will be done!" said Rebecca; "I put my trust in Him, to whom an instant is as effectual to save as a whole age."

"Thou hast spoken well, damsel," said the Grand Master; "but well know we who can array himself like an angel of light. It remains but to name a fitting place of combat, and, if it so hap, also of execution.—Where is the Preceptor of this house?"

Albert Malvoisin, still holding Rebecca's glove in his hand, was speaking to Bois-Guilbert very earnestly, but in a low voice.

"How!" said the Grand Master, "will he not receive the gage?"

"He will—he doth, most Reverend Father," said Malvoisin, slipping the glove under his own

mantle. "And for the place of combat, I hold the fittest to be the lists of Saint George belonging to this Preceptory, and used by us for military exercise."

"It is well," said the Grand Master. "Rebecca, in those lists shalt thou produce thy champion; and if thou failest to do so, or if thy champion shall be discomfited by the judgment of God, thou shalt then die the death of a sorceress, according to doom.—Let this our judgment be recorded, and the record read aloud, that no one may pretend ignorance."

One of the chaplains, who acted as clerks to the chapter, immediately ingrossed the order in a huge volume, which contained the proceedings of the Templar Knights when solemnly assembled on such occasions; and when he had finished writing, the other read aloud the sentence of the Grand Master, which, when translated from the Norman French, in which it was couched, was expressed as follows:—

"Rebecca, a Jewess, daughter of Isaac of York, being attainted of sorcery, seduction, and

other damnable practices, practised on a Knight of the most Holy Order of the Temple of Zion, doth deny the same; and saith, that the testimony delivered against her this day is false, wicked, and disloyal; and that by lawful *essoine** of her body, as being unable to combat in her own behalf, she doth offer, by a gentleman instead thereof, to avouch her case, he performing his loyal *devoir* in all knightly sort, with such arms as to gage of battle do fully appertain, and that at her peril and cost. And therewith she proffered her gage. And the gage having been delivered to the noble Lord and Knight, Brian de Bois-Guilbert of the Holy Order of the Temple of Zion, he was appointed to do this battle, in behalf of his Order and himself, as injured and impaired by the practices of the appellant. Wherefore the most reverend Father and puissant Lord, Lucas, Marquis of Beaumanoir, did allow of the said challenge, and of the said *essoine* of the appellant's

* *Essoine* signifies excuse, and here relates to the appellant's privilege of appearing by her champion, in excuse of her own person on account of her sex.

body, and assigned the third day for the said combat, the place being the inclosure called the lists of Saint George, near to the Preceptory of Templestowe. And the Grand Master appoints the appellant to appear there by her champion, on pain of doom, as a person convicted of sorcery or seduction; and also the defendant so to appear, under the penalty of being held and adjudged recreant in case of default; and the noble Lord and most reverend Father aforesaid appointeth the battle to be done in his own presence, and according to all that is commendable and profitable in such a case. And may God aid the just cause!"

"Amen!" said the Grand Master; and the word was echoed by all around. Rebecca spoke not, but she looked up to heaven, and, folding her hands, remained for a minute without change of attitude. She then modestly reminded the Grand Master, that she ought to be permitted some opportunity of free communication with her friends, for the purpose of making her condition known to them, and procuring, if possible, some champion to fight in her behalf.

" It is just and lawful," said the Grand Master; " chuse what messenger thou shalt trust, and he shall have free communication with thee in thy prison chamber."

" Is there," said Rebecca, " any one here, who, either for love of a good cause, or for ample hire, will do the errand of a distressed being ?"

All were silent; for none thought it safe, in the presence of the Grand Master, to avow any interest in the calumniated prisoner, lest he should be suspected of leaning towards Judaism. Not even the prospect of reward, far less any feelings of compassion alone, could surmount this apprehension.

Rebecca stood for a few moments in indescribable anxiety, and then exclaimed, " Is it really thus ?—And, in English land, am I to be deprived of the poor chance of safety which remains to me, for want of an act of charity which would not be refused to the worst criminal ?"

Higg, the son of Snell, at length replied, " I am but a maimed man, but that I can at all stir or move was owing to her charitable assistance.—

I will do thine errand," he added, addressing Rebecca, "as well as a crippled object can, and happy were my limbs fleet enough to repair the mischief done by my tongue. Alas! when I boasted of thy charity, I little thought I was leading thee into danger."

"God," said Rebecca, "is the disposer of all. He can turn back the captivity of Judah, even by the weakest instrument. To execute his message the snail is as sure a messenger as the falcon. Seek out Isaac of York—here is that will pay for horse and man—and let him have this scroll. —I know not if it be of Heaven the spirit which inspires me, but most truly do I judge that I am not to die this death, and that a champion will be raised up for me. Farewell!—Life and death are in thy haste."

The peasant took the scroll, which contained only a few words in Hebrew. Many of the crowd would have dissuaded him from touching a document so suspicious; but Higg was resolute in the service of his benefactress. She had saved his body, he said, and he was confident she did not mean to peril his soul.

"I will get me," he said, "my neighbour Buthan's good capul, and I will be at York within as brief space as man and beast may."

But as it fortuned, he had no occasion to go so far, for within a quarter of a mile from the gate of the Preceptory he met with two riders, whom, by their dress and their huge yellow caps, he knew to be Jews; and, on approaching more nearly, discovered that one of them was his ancient employer, Isaac of York. The other was the Rabbi Ben Samuel; and both had approached as near to the Preceptory as they dared, on hearing that the Grand Master had summoned a chapter for the trial of a sorceress.

"Brother Ben Samuel," said Isaac, "my soul is disquieted, and I wot not why. This charge of necromancy is right often used for cloaking evil practices on our people."

"Be of good comfort, brother," said the physician; "thou canst deal with the Nazarenes as one possessing the mammon of unrighteousness, and canst therefore purchase immunity at their hands—it rules the savage minds of those un-

godly men, even as the signet of the mighty Solomon was said to command the evil genii. But what poor wretch comes hither upon his crutches, desiring, as I think, some speech of me?—Friend," continued the physician, addressing Higg, the son of Snell, "I refuse thee not the aid of mine art, but I relieve not with one asper those who beg for alms upon the highway. Out upon thee!—Hast thou the palsy in thy legs? then let thy hands work for thy livelihood; for, albeit thou be'st unfit for a speedy post, or for a careful shepherd, or for the warfare, or for the service of a hasty master, yet there be occupations—How now, brother?" said he, interrupting his harangue to look towards Isaac, who had but glanced at the scroll which Higg offered, when, uttering a deep groan, he fell from his mule like a dying man, and lay for a minute insensible.

The Rabbi now dismounted in great alarm, and hastily applied the remedies which his art suggested for the recovery of his companion. He had even taken from his pocket a cupping apparatus, and was about to proceed to phlebo-

tomy, when the object of his anxious solicitude suddenly revived; but it was to dash his cap from his head, and to throw dust on his grey hairs. The physician was at first inclined to ascribe this sudden and violent emotion to the effects of insanity; and, adhering to his original purpose, began once again to handle his implements. But Isaac soon convinced him of his error.

"Child of my sorrow," he said, "well shouldst thou be called Benoni, instead of Rebecca! Why should thy death bring down my grey hairs to the grave, till in the bitterness of my heart I curse God and die?"

"Brother," said the Rabbi in great surprise, "art thou a father in Israel, and dost thou utter words like unto these?—I trust that the child of thy house yet liveth?"

"She liveth," answered Isaac; "but it is as Daniel, who was called Belteshazzar, even when within the den of the lions. She is captive unto those men of Belial, and they will wreak their cruelty upon her, sparing neither for her youth nor her comely favour. O! she was as a crown

of green palms to my grey locks; and she must wither in a night, like the gourd of Jonah.—Child of my love!—child of my old age!—oh, Rebecca, daughter of Rachel! the darkness of the shadow of death hath encompassed thee."

"Yet read the scroll," said the Rabbi; "peradventure it may be that we may yet find out a way of deliverance."

"Do thou read, brother," answered Isaac, "for mine eyes are as a fountain of water."

The physician read, but in their native language, the following words:—

"To Isaac, the son of Adonikam, whom the Gentiles call Isaac of York, peace and the blessing of the promise be multiplied upon thee!—My father, I am as one doomed to die for that which my soul knoweth not—even for the crime of witchcraft. My father, if a strong man can be found to do battle for my cause with sword and spear, according to the custom of the Nazarenes, and that within the lists of Godstowe, on the third day from this time, peradventure our fathers' God will give him strength to defend the

innocent, and her who hath none to help her. But if this may not be, let the virgins of our people mourn for me as for one cast off, and for the hart that is stricken by the hunter, and for the flower which is cut down by the scythe of the mower. Wherefore look now what thou doest, and whither there be any rescue. One Nazarene warrior might indeed bear arms in my behalf, even Wilfrid, son of Cedric, whom the Gentiles call Ivanhoe. But he may not yet endure the weight of his armour. Nevertheless, send the tidings unto him, my father; for he hath favour among the strong men of his people, and, as he was our companion in the house of bondage, he may find some one to do battle for my sake. And say unto him, even unto him, even unto Wilfrid, the son of Cedric, that if Rebecca live, or if Rebecca die, she liveth or dieth wholly free of the guilt she is charged withal. And if it be the will of God that thou shalt be deprived of thy daughter, do not thou tarry, old man, in this land of bloodshed and cruelty; but betake thyself to Cordova, where thy brother liveth in

safety, under the shadow of the throne, even of the throne of Boabdil the Saracen; for less cruel are the cruelties of the Moors unto the race of Jacob, than the cruelties of the Nazarenes of England."

Isaac listened with tolerable composure while Ben Samuel read the letter, and then again resumed the gestures and exclamations of oriental sorrow, tearing his garments, besprinkling his head with dust, and ejaculating, "My daughter! my daughter! flesh of my flesh, and bone of my bone!"

"Yet," said the Rabbi, "take courage, for this grief availeth nothing. Gird up thy loins, and seek out this Wilfrid, the son of Cedric. It may be he will help thee with counsel or with strength; for the youth hath favour in the eyes of Richard, called of the Nazarenes Cœur de Lion, and the tidings that he hath returned, are constant in the land. It may be that he may obtain his letter, and his signet, commanding these men of blood, who take their name from the Temple to the dishonour thereof, that they proceed not in their purposed wickedness."

"I will seek him out," said Isaac, "for he is a good youth, and hath compassion for the exile of Jacob. But he cannot bear his armour, and what other Christian shall do battle for the oppressed of Zion?"

"Nay, but," said the Rabbi, "thou speakest as one that knoweth not the Gentiles. With gold shalt thou buy their valour, even as with gold thou buyest thine own safety. Be of good courage, and do thou set forward to find out this Wilfrid of Ivanhoe. I will also up and be doing, for great sin it were to leave thee in thine calamity. I will hie me to the city of York, where many warriors and strong men are assembled, and doubt not I will find among them some one who will do battle for thy daughter; for gold is their god, and for riches will they pawn their lives as well as their lands.—Thou wilt fulfil, my brother, such promise as I may make unto them in thy name?"

"Assuredly, brother," said Isaac, "and Heaven be praised that raised me up a comforter in my misery. Howbeit, grant them not their full demand at once, for thou shalt find it the quality

of this accursed people that they will ask pounds, and peradventure accept of ounces—Nevertheless, be it as thou willest, for I am distracted in this thing, and what would my gold avail me if the child of my love should perish?"

"Farewell," said the physician, "and may it be to thee as thy heart desires."

They embraced accordingly, and departed on their several roads. The crippled peasant remained for some time looking after them.

"These dog-Jews!" said he; "to take no more notice of a free guild-brother, than if I were a bond slave, or a Turk, or a circumcised Hebrew like themselves! They might have flung me a mancus or two, however. I was not obliged to bring their unhallowed scrawls, and run the risk of being bewitched, as more folks than one told me. And what care I for the bit of gold that the wench gave me, if I am to come to harm from the priest next Easter at confession, and be obliged to give him twice as much to make it up with him, and be called the Jew's flying post all my life, it may hap, into the bargain? I think I was

bewitched in earnest when I was beside that girl! —But it was always so with Jew or Gentile, whosoever came near her—none could stay when she had an errand to go—and still, whenever I think of her, I would give shop and tools to save her life."

CHAPTER IX.

O maid, unrelenting and cold as thou art,
My bosom is proud as thine own.
SEWARD.

It was in the twilight of the day when her trial, if it could be called such, had taken place, that a low knock was heard at the door of Rebecca's prison chamber. It disturbed not the inmate, who was then engaged in the evening prayer recommended by her religion, and which concluded with a hymn we have ventured thus to translate into English.

When Israel, of the Lord beloved,
Out from the land of bondage came,
Her father's God before her moved,
An awful guide in smoke and flame.
By day, along the astonish'd lands
The cloudy pillar glided slow;
By night, Arabia's crimson'd sands
Return'd the fiery column's glow.

There rose the choral hymn of praise,
  And trump and timbrel answer'd keen,
And Zion's daughters pour'd their lays,
  With priest's and warrior's voice between.
No portents now our foes amaze,
  Forsaken Israel wanders lone;
Our fathers would not know THY ways,
  And THOU hast left them to their own.

But, present still, though now unseen!
  When brightly shines the prosperous day,
Be thoughts of THEE a cloudy screen
  To temper the deceitful ray.
And oh, when stoops on Judah's path
  In shade and storm the frequent night,
Be THOU, long-suffering, slow to wrath,
  A burning and a shining light!

Our harps we left by Babel's streams,
  The tyrant's jest, the Gentile's scorn;
No censer round our altar beams,
  And mute are timbrel, trump, and horn.
But THOU hast said, The blood of goat,
  The flesh of rams, I will not prize;
A contrite heart, a humble thought,
  Are mine accepted sacrifice.

When the sounds of Rebecca's devotional hymn had died away in silence, the low knock at the door was again renewed. "Enter," she said, "if thou art a friend; and if a foe, I have not the means of refusing thy entrance."

"I am," said Brian de Bois-Guilbert, entering the apartment, "friend or foe, Rebecca, as the event of this interview shall make me."

Alarmed at the sight of this man, whose licentious passion she considered as the root of her misfortunes, Rebecca drew backward, with a cautious and alarmed, yet not a timorous demeanour, into the farthest corner of the apartment, as if determined to retreat as far as she could, but to stand her ground when retreat became no longer possible. She drew herself into an attitude not of defiance, but of resolution, as one that would avoid provoking assault, yet was resolute to repell it, being offered, to the utmost of her power.

"You have no reason to fear me, Rebecca," said the Templar; "or if I must so qualify my speech, you have at least *now* no reason to fear me."

"I fear you not, Sir Knight," replied Rebecca, although her short-drawn breath seemed to belie the heroism of her accents; "my trust is strong, and I fear thee not."

"You have no cause," answered Bois-Guilbert, gravely; "my former frantic attempts you have not now to dread. Within your call is a guard, over whom I have no authority. They are designed to conduct you to death, Rebecca, yet would not suffer you to be insulted by any one, even by me, were my frenzy—for frenzy it is—to urge me so far."

"May Heaven be praised!" said the Jewess; "death is the least of my apprehensions in this den of evil."

"Ay," replied the Templar, "the idea of death is easily received by the courageous mind, when the road to it is sudden and open. A thrust with a lance, a stroke with a sword, were to me little—To you, a spring from a dizzy battlement, a stroke with a sharp poniard, has no terrors, compared with what either thinks disgrace. Mark me—I say this—perhaps mine own senti-

ments of honour are not less fantastic, Rebecca, than thine are; but we know alike how to die for them."

"Unhappy man!" said the Jewess; "and art thou condemned to expose thy life for principles, of which thy sober judgment does not acknowledge the solidity? Surely this is a parting with your treasure for that which is not bread—but deem not so of me. Thy resolution may fluctuate on the wild and changeful billows of human opinion, but mine is anchored on the Rock of ages."

"Silence, maiden," answered the Templar; "such discourse now avails but little—thou art condemned to die not a sudden and easy death, such as misery chuses, and despair allows, but a slow, wretched, protracted course of torture, suited to what the diabolical bigotry of these men calls thy crime."

"And to whom—if such my fate—to whom do I owe this?" said Rebecca; "surely only to him, who, for a most selfish and brutal cause, dragged me hither, and who now, for some unknown purpose of his own, strives to exaggerate the wretched fate to which he exposed me."

"Think not," said the Templar, "that I have so exposed thee; I would have bucklered thee against such danger with my own bosom, as freely as ever I exposed it to the shafts which had otherwise reached thy life."

"Had thy purpose been the honourable protection of the innocent," said Rebecca, "I had thanked thee for thy care—as it is, thou hast claimed merit for it so often, that I tell thee life is worth nothing to me, preserved at the price which thou wouldst exact for it."

"Truce with thine upbraidings, Rebecca," said the Templar; "I have my own cause of grief, and brook not that thy reproaches should add to it."

"What is thy purpose then, Sir Knight?" said the Jewess; "speak it briefly.—If thou hast aught to do, save to witness the misery thou hast caused, let me know it; and then, if so it please you, leave me to myself—the step between time and eternity is short but terrible, and I have few moments to prepare for it."

"I perceive, Rebecca," said Bois-Guilbert,

"that thou dost continue to burthen me with the charge of distresses, which most fain would I have prevented."

"Sir Knight," said Rebecca, "I would avoid reproaches—But what is more certain than that I owe my death to thine unbridled passion?"

"You err—you err,"—said the Templar hastily, "if you impute what I could neither foresee nor prevent to my purpose or agency.—Could I guess the unexpected arrival of yon dotard, whom some flashes of frantic valour, and the praises due to the stupid self-torments of an ascetic, have raised for the present above his own merits, above common sense, above me, and above the hundreds of our Order, who think and feel as men free from such silly and fantastic prejudices as are the grounds of his opinions and actions?"

"Yet," said Rebecca, "you sate a judge upon me, innocent—most innocent—as you knew me to be—you concurred in my condemnation, and, if I aright understood, are yourself to appear in arms to assert my guilt, and assure my punishment."

"Thy patience, maiden," replied the Templar.—"No race knows so well as thine own how to submit to the time, and so to trim their bark as to make advantage even of an adverse wind."

"Lamented be the hour," said Rebecca, "that has taught such art to the House of Israel—but adversity bends the heart as fire bends the stubborn steel, and those who are no longer their own governors, and the denizens of their own free independent state, must crouch before strangers. It is our curse, Sir Knight, deserved, doubtless, by our own misdeeds and those of our fathers; but you—you who boast your freedom as your birthright, how much deeper is your disgrace when you stoop to soothe the prejudices of others, and that against your own conviction?"

"Your words are bitter, Rebecca," said Bois-Guilbert, pacing the apartment with impatience, "but I came not hither to bandy reproaches with thee.—Know that Bois-Guilbert yields not to created man, although circumstances may for a time induce him to alter his plan. His will is the mountain stream, which may indeed be turned

for a little space aside by the rock, but fails not to find its course to the ocean. That scroll which warned thee to demand a champion, from whom could'st thou think it came, if not from Bois-Guilbert? In whom else could'st thou have excited such interest?"

"A brief respite from instant death," said Rebecca, "which will little avail me—was this all thou could'st do for one, on whose head thou hast heaped sorrow, and whom thou hast brought near even to the verge of the tomb?"

"No, maiden," said Bois-Guilbert, "this was not all that I purposed. Had it not been for the accursed interference of yon fanatical dotard, and the fool of Goodalricke, who, being a Templar, affects to think and judge according to the ordinary rules of humanity, the office of the Champion Defender had devolved, not on a Preceptor, but on a Companion of the Order. Then I myself—such was my purpose—had, on the sounding of the trumpet, appeared in the lists as thy champion, disguised indeed in the fashion of a roving knight, who seeks adventures to prove his

shield and spear; and then, let Beaumanoir chuse not one, but two or three of the brethren here assembled, I had not doubted to cast them out of the saddle with my single lance. Thus, Rebecca, should thine innocence have been avouched, and to thine own gratitude would I have trusted for the reward of my victory."

"This, Sir Knight," said Rebecca, "is but idle boasting—a brag of what you would have done had you not found it convenient to do otherwise. You received my glove, and my champion, if a creature so desolate can find one, must encounter your lance in the lists—yet you would assume the air of my friend and protector!"

"Thy friend and protector," said the Templar, gravely, "I will yet be—but mark at what risk, or rather at what certainty, of dishonour, and then blame me not if I make my stipulations, before I offer up all my life has hitherto held dear, to save the life of a Jewish maiden."

"Speak," said Rebecca; "I understand thee not."

"Well, then," said Bois-Guilbert, "I will speak as freely as ever did doating penitent to

his ghostly father, when placed in the tricky confessional.—Rebecca, if I appear not in these lists I lose fame and rank—lose that which is the breath of my nostrils, the esteem, I mean, in which I am held by my brethren, and the hopes I have of succeeding to that mighty authority, which is now wielded by the bigotted and dotard Lucas de Beaumanoir. Such is my certain doom, except I appear in arms against thy cause. Accursed be he of Goodalricke, who baited this trap for me! and doubly accursed Albert de Malvoisin, who withheld me from the resolution I had formed, of hurling back the glove at the face of the superstitious and superannuated fool, who listened to a charge so absurd, and against a creature so high in mind and so lovely in form as thou art!"

"And what now avails rant or flattery?" answered Rebecca. "Thou hast made thy choice between causing to be shed the blood of an innocent woman, and thine own earthly state and earthly hopes—What avails it to reckon together?—thy choice is made."

"No, Rebecca," said the knight, in a softer

tone, and drawing nearer towards her; "my choice is not made—nay, mark, it is thine to make the election. If I appear in the lists, I must maintain my name in arms; and if I do so, championed or unchampioned, thou diest by the stake and faggot, for there lives not the knight who hath coped with me in arms on equal issue, or on terms of vantage, save Richard Cœur de Lion, and his minion of Ivanhoe. Ivanhoe, as thou well knowest, is unable to bear his corslet, and Richard is in a foreign prison. If I appear, then thou diest, even although thy charms should instigate some hot-headed youth to enter the lists in thy defence."

"And what avails repeating this so often?" said Rebecca.

"Much," replied the Templar; "for thou must learn to look at thy fate on every side."

"Well then, turn the tapestry," said the Jewess, "and let me see the other side."

"If I appear," said Bois-Guilbert, "in the fatal lists, thou diest by a slow and cruel death, in pain such as they say is destined to the guilty hereafter. But if I appear not, then am I a degraded

and dishonoured knight, accused of witchcraft, and of communion with infidels—the illustrious name which has grown yet more so under my wearing, becomes a hissing and a reproach. I lose fame, I lose honour, I lose the prospect of such greatness as scarce emperors attain to—I sacrifice mighty ambition, I destroy schemes built as high as the mountains with which heathens say their heaven was once nearly scaled—and yet, Rebecca," he added, throwing himself at her feet, "this greatness will I sacrifice, this fame will I renounce, this power will I forego, even now when it is half within my grasp, if thou wilt say, Bois-Guilbert, I receive thee for my lover."

"Think not of such foolishness, Sir Knight," answered Rebecca, "but hasten to the Regent and to Prince John—they cannot, in honour to the crown, allow of the proceedings of your Grand Master. So shall you give me protection without sacrifice on your part, or the pretext of requiring any requital from me."

"With these I deal not," he continued, holding the train of her robe—"it is thee only I address; and what can counterbalance thy choice?

Bethink thee, were I a fiend, yet death is a worse, and it is death who is my rival."

"I weigh not these evils," said Rebecca, afraid to provoke the wild knight, yet equally determined neither to endure his passion, nor even feign to endure it. "Be a man, be a Christian! If indeed thy faith recommends that mercy which rather your tongues than your actions pretend, save me from this dreadful death, without seeking a requital which would change thy magnanimity into base barter."

"No, damsel!" said the proud Templar, springing up, "thou shalt not thus impose on me—if I renounce present fame and future ambition, I renounce it for thy sake, and we will escape in company. Listen to me, Rebecca," he said, again softening his tone; "England, Europe,—is not the world. There are spheres in which we may act, ample enough even for my ambition. We will go to Palestine, where Conrade, Marquis of Montserrat, is my friend—a friend free as myself from the doting scruples which fetter our free-born reason—rather with Saladin will we league ourselves, than endure the scorn of the bigots whom

we contemn.—I will form new paths to greatness," he continued, again traversing the room with hasty strides—"Europe shall hear the loud step of him she has driven from her sons!—Not the millions whom her crusaders send to slaughter, can do so much to defend Palestine—not the sabres of the thousands and ten thousands of Saracens can hew their way so deep into that land for which nations are striving, as the strength and policy of me and those brethren, who, in despite of yonder old bigot, will adhere to me in good and evil. Thou shalt be a queen, Rebecca—on Mount Carmel shall we pitch the throne which my valour will gain for you, and I will exchange my long desired batton for a sceptre."

"A dream," said Rebecca; "an empty vision of the night, which, were it a waking reality, affects me not—enough that the power which thou mightest acquire, I will never share; nor hold I so light of country or religious faith, as to esteem him who is willing to barter these ties, and cast away the bonds of the Order of which he is a sworn member, in order to gratify an unruly passion for the daughter of another people.—Put

not a price on my deliverance, Sir Knight—sell not a deed of generosity—protect the oppressed for the sake of charity, and not for a selfish advantage—Go to the throne of England, Richard will listen to my appeal from these cruel men."

"Never, Rebecca," said the Templar, fiercely. "If I renounce my Order, for thee alone will I renounce it—Ambition shall remain mine, if thou refuse my love; I will not be fooled on all hands.—Stoop my crest to Richard?—ask a boon of that heart of pride?—Never, Rebecca, will I place the Order of the Temple at his feet in my person. I may forsake the Order, I never will degrade or betray it."

"Now God be gracious to me," said Rebecca, "for the succour of man is well nigh hopeless!"

"It is indeed," said the Templar; "for proud as thou art, thou hast in me found thy match. If I enter the lists with my spear in rest, think not any human consideration shall prevent my putting forth my strength; and think then upon thine own fate—to die the dreadful death of the worst of criminals—to be consumed upon a blazing pile—dispersed to the elements of which our strange

forms are so mystically composed—not a relique left of that graceful frame, from which we could say this lived and moved!—Rebecca, it is not in woman to sustain this prospect—thou wilt yield to my suit."

"Bois-Guilbert," answered the Jewess, "thou knowest not the heart of woman, or hast only conversed with those who are lost to her best feelings. I tell thee, proud Templar, that not in thy fiercest battles hast thou displayed more of thy vaunted courage, than has been shewn by woman when called upon to suffer by affection or duty. I am myself a woman, tenderly nurtured, naturally fearful of danger, and impatient of pain—yet, when we enter those fatal lists, thou to fight and I to suffer, I feel the strong assurance within me, that my courage shall mount higher than thine. Farewell—I waste no more words on thee; the time that remains on earth to the daughter of Jacob must be otherwise spent—she must seek the Comforter, who may hide his face from his people, but who ever opens his ear to the cry of those who seek him in sincerity and in truth."

"We part then thus," said the Templar, after a short pause; "would to Heaven that we had never met, or that thou hadst been noble in birth and Christian in faith!—Nay, by Heaven! when I gaze on thee, and think when and how we are next to meet, I could even wish myself one of thine own degraded nation; my hand conversant with ingots and shekels, instead of spear and shield; my head bent down before each petty noble, and my look only terrible to the shivering and bankrupt debtor—this could I wish, Rebecca, to be near to thee in life, and to escape the fearful share I must have in thy death."

"Thou hast spoken the Jew," said Rebecca, "as the persecution of such as thou art has made him. Heaven in ire has driven him from his country, but industry has opened to him the only road to power and to influence, which oppression has left unbarred. Read the ancient history of the people of God, and tell me if those, by whom Jehovah wrought such marvels among the nations, were then a people of misers and of usurers!—And know, proud knight, we number names amongst us to which your boasted northern no-

bility is as the gourd compared with the cedar—names that ascend far back to those high times when the Divine Presence shook the mercy-seat between the cherubim, and which derive their splendour from no earthly prince, but from the awful Voice, which bade their fathers be nearest of the congregation to the Vision—Such were the princes of the House of Jacob."

Rebecca's colour rose as she boasted the ancient glories of her race, but faded as she added, with a sigh, "Such *were* the princes of Judah, now such no more!—They are trampled down like the shorn grass, and mixed with the mire of the ways. Yet are there those among them who shame not such high descent, and of such shall be the daughter of Isaac the son of Adonikam! Farewell!—I envy not thy blood-won honours—I envy not thy barbarous descent from northern heathens—I envy thee not thy faith, which is ever in thy mouth, but never in thy heart nor in thy practice."

"There is a spell on me, by Heaven!" said Bois-Guilbert. "I well nigh think yon besotted skeleton spoke truth, and that the reluctance

with which I part from thee hath something in it more than is natural.—Fair creature!" he said, approaching near her, but with great respect,—"so young, so beautiful, so fearless of death! and yet doomed to die, and with infamy and agony. Who would not weep for thee?—The tear, that has been a stranger to these eye-lids for twenty years, moistens them as I gaze on thee. But it must be—nothing may now save thy life. Thou and I are but the blind instruments of some irresistible fatality, that hurries us along, like goodly vessels driving before the storm, which are dashed against each other, and so perish. Forgive me, then, and let us part at least as friends part. I have assailed thy resolution in vain, and mine own is fixed as the adamantine decrees of fate."

"Thus," said Rebecca, "do men throw on fate the issue of their own wild passions. But I do forgive thee, Bois-Guilbert, though the author of my early death. There are noble things which cross over thy powerful mind; but it is the garden of the sluggard, and the weeds have rushed

up, and conspired to choak the fair and wholesome blossom."

"Yet," said the Templar, "I am, Rebecca, as thou hast spoken me, untaught, untamed—and proud, that, amidst a shoal of empty fools and crafty bigots, I have retained the pre-eminent fortitude that places me above them. I have been a child of battle from my youth upward, high in my views, steady and inflexible in pursuing them. Such must I remain—proud, inflexible, and unchanging; and of this the world shall have proof. —But thou forgivest me, Rebecca?"

"As freely as ever victim forgave her executioner."

"Farewell, then," said the Templar, and left the apartment.

The Preceptor Albert waited impatiently in an adjacent chamber the return of Bois-Guilbert.

"Thou hast tarried long," he said; "I have been as if stretched on red-hot iron with very impatience. What if the Grand Master, or his spy Conrade, had come hither? I had paid dear for my complaisance.—But what ails thee, bro-

ther?—Thy step totters, thy brow is as black as night. Art thou well, Bois-Guilbert?"

"Ay," answered the Templar, "as well as the wretch who is doomed to die within an hour.—Nay, by the rood, not half so well—for there be those in such state, who can lay down life like a cast-off garment. By heaven, Malvoisin, yonder girl hath well nigh unmanned me. I am half resolved to go to the Grand Master, abjure the Order to his very teeth, and refuse to act the brutality which his tyranny has imposed on me."

"Thou art mad," answered Malvoisin; "thou mayest thus indeed utterly ruin thyself, but canst not even find a chance thereby to save the life of this Jewess, which seems so precious in thine eyes. Beaumanoir will name another of the Order to defend his judgment in thy place, and the accused will as assuredly perish as if thou hadst taken the duty imposed on thee."

"'Tis false—I will myself take arms in her behalf," answered the Templar, haughtily; "and, should I do so, I think, Malvoisin, that thou

knowest not one of the Order, who will keep his saddle before the point of my lance."

"Ay, but thou forgettest thou wilt have neither leisure nor opportunity to execute this mad project. Go to Lucas Beaumanoir, and say thou hast renounced thy vow of obedience, and see how long the despotic old man will leave thee in personal freedom. The words shall scarce have left thy lips, ere thou wilt either be an hundred feet under ground, in the dungeon of the Preceptory, to abide trial as a recreant knight; or, if his opinion holds concerning thy possession, thou wilt be enjoying straw, darkness, and chains, in some distant convent cell, stunned with exorcisms, and drenched with holy water, to expel the foul fiend which hath obtained dominion over thee. Thou must to the lists, Brian, or thou art a lost and dishonoured man."

"I will break forth and fly," said Bois-Guilbert—"fly to some distant land, to which folly and fanaticism have not yet found their way. No drop of the blood of this most excellent creature shall be spilled by my sanction."

"Thou canst not fly," said the Preceptor; "thy ravings have excited suspicion, and thou wilt not be permitted to leave the Preceptory. Go and make the essay—present thyself before the gate, and command the bridge to be lowered, and mark what answer thou shalt receive.—Thou art surprised and offended; but is it not better for thee? Wert thou to fly, what could ensue but the reversal of thy arms, the dishonour of thine ancestry, the degradation of thy rank?—Think on it. Where shall thine old companions in arms hide their heads when Brian de Bois-Guilbert, the best lance of the Templars, is proclaimed recreant, amid the hisses of the assembled people? What grief will be at the Court of France! With what joy will the haughty Richard hear the news, that the knight that set him hard in Palestine, and well nigh darkened his renown, has lost fame and honour for a Jewish girl, whom he could not even save by so costly a sacrifice."

"Malvoisin," said the Knight, "I thank thee—thou hast touched the string at which my heart most readily thrills!—Come of it what may, re-

creant shall never be added to the name of Bois-Guilbert. Would to God, Richard, or any of his vaunting minions of England, would appear in these lists! But they will be empty—no one will risk to break a lance for the innocent, the forlorn."

"The better for thee, if it prove so," said the Preceptor; "if no champion appears, it is not by thy means that this unlucky damsel shall die, but by the doom of the Grand Master, with whom rests all the blame, and who will count that blame for praise and commendation."

"True," said Bois-Guilbert; "if no champion appears, I am but a part of the pageant, sitting indeed on horseback in the lists, but having no part in what is to follow."

"None whatever," said Malvoisin; "no more than the armed image of Saint George when it makes part of a procession."

"Well, I will resume my resolution. She has despised me—repulsed me—reviled me—And wherefore should I offer up for her whatever of estimation I have in the opinion of others? Malvoisin, I will appear in the lists."

He left the apartment hastily as he uttered these words, and the Preceptor followed, to watch and confirm him in his resolution; for in Bois-Guilbert's fame he had himself a strong interest, expecting much advantage from his being one day at the head of the Order, not to mention the preferment of which Mont-Fitchet had given him hopes, on condition he would forward the condemnation of the unfortunate Rebecca. Yet although, in combating his friend's better feelings, he possessed all the advantage which a wily, composed, selfish disposition has over a man agitated by strong and contending passions, it required all Malvoisin's art to keep Bois-Guilbert steady to the purpose he had prevailed on him to adopt. He was obliged to watch him closely to prevent his resuming his purpose of flight, to intercept his communication with the Grand Master, lest he should come to an open rupture with his Superior, and to renew, from time to time, the various arguments by which he endeavoured to shew, that, in appearing as champion on this occasion, Bois-Guilbert, without either

accelerating or ensuring the fate of Rebecca, would follow the only course by which he could save himself from degradation and disgrace.

CHAPTER X.

Shadows, avaunt!—Richard's himself again.

Richard III.

When the Black Knight—for it becomes necessary to resume the train of his adventures—left the Trysting-tree of the generous Outlaw, he held his way straight to a neighbouring religious house, of small extent and revenue, called the Priory of Saint Botolph, to which the wounded Ivanhoe had been removed when the castle was taken, under the guidance of the faithful Gurth, and the magnanimous Wamba. It is unnecessary at present to mention what took place in the interim betwixt Wilfrid and his deliverer; suffice it to say, that after long and grave communication, messengers were dispatched by the Prior in several directions, and that upon the

succeeding morning the Black Knight was about to set forth on his journey, accompanied by the jester Wamba, who attended as his guide.

"We will meet," he said to Ivanhoe, "at Conningsburgh, the castle of the deceased Athelstane, since there thy father Cedric holds the funeral feast for his noble relation. I would see your Saxon kindred together, Sir Wilfrid, and become better acquainted with them than heretofore. Thou also wilt meet me; and it shall be my task to reconcile thee to thy father."

So saying, he took an affectionate farewell of Ivanhoe, who expressed an anxious desire to attend upon his deliverer. But the Black Knight would not listen to the proposal.

"Rest this day; thou wilt have scarce strength enough to travel on the next. I will have no guide with me but honest Wamba, who can play priest or fool as I shall be most in the humour."

"And I," said Wamba, "will attend you with all my heart. I would fain see the feasting at the funeral of Athelstane; for, if it be not full and frequent, he will rise from the dead to rebuke cook, sewer, and cup-bearer; and that

were a sight worth seeing. Always, Sir Knight, I will trust your valour with making my excuse to Cedric, in case mine own wit should fail."

"And how should my poor valour succeed, Sir Jester, when thy light wit halts?—resolve me that."

"Wit, Sir Knight," replied the Jester, "may do much. He is a quick, apprehensive knave, who sees his neighbour's blind side, and knows how to keep the lee-gage when his passions are blowing high. But Valour is a sturdy fellow, that makes all split. He rows against both wind and tide, and makes way notwithstanding; and, therefore, good Sir Knight, while I take advantage of the fair weather in our noble master's temper, I will expect you to bestir yourself when it grows rough."

"Sir Knight of the Fetterlock, since it is your pleasure so to be distinguished," said Ivanhoe, "I fear me you have chosen a talkative and a troublesome fool to be your guide. But he knows every path and alley in the woods as well as e'er a hunter who frequents them; and the

poor knave, as thou hast partly seen, is as faithful as steel."

"Nay," said the Knight, "an he have the gift of shewing my road, I shall not grumble with him that he desires to make it pleasant.—Fare thee well, kind Wilfrid—I charge thee not to attempt to travel till to-morrow at earliest."

So saying, he extended his hand to Ivanhoe, who pressed it to his lips, took leave of the Prior, mounted his horse, and departed, with Wamba for his companion. Ivanhoe followed them with his eyes, until they were lost in the shades of the surrounding forest, and then returned into the convent.

But shortly after mattin-song, he requested to see the Prior. The old man came in haste, and enquired anxiously after the state of his health.

"It is better," he said, "than my fondest hope could have anticipated; either my wound has been slighter than the effusion of blood led me to suppose, or this balsam hath wrought a wonderful cure upon it. I feel already as if I

could bear my corslet; and so much the better, for thoughts pass in my mind which render me unwilling to remain here longer in inactivity."

"Now, the saints forbid," said the Prior, "that the son of the Saxon Cedric should leave our convent ere his wounds were healed! It were shame to our profession were we to suffer it."

"Nor would I desire to leave your hospitable roof, venerable father," said Ivanhoe, "did I not feel myself able to endure the journey, and compelled to undertake it."

"And what can have urged you to so sudden a departure?" said the Prior.

"Have you never, holy father," answered the Knight, "felt an apprehension of approaching evil, for which you in vain attempted to assign a cause?—Have you never found your mind darkened, like the sunny landscape, by the sudden cloud, which augurs a coming tempest?—And thinkest thou not that such impulses are deserving of attention, as being the hints of our guardian spirits, that danger is impending?"

"I may not deny," said the Prior, crossing himself, "that such things have been, and have

been of Heaven; but then such communications have had a visibly useful scope and tendency. But thou, wounded as thou art, what avails it thou shouldst follow the steps of him whom thou couldst not aid, were he to be assaulted?"

"Prior," said Ivanhoe, "thou doest mistake—I am stout enough to exchange buffets with any who will challenge me to such a traffic—But were it otherwise, may I not aid him were he in danger, by other means than by force of arms? It is but too well known that the Saxons love not the Norman race, and who knows what may be the issue, if he break in upon them when their hearts are irritated by the death of Athelstane, and their heads heated by the carousal in which they will indulge themselves? I hold his entrance among them at such a moment most perilous, and I am resolved to share or avert the danger, which, that I may the better do, I would crave of thee the use of some palfrey whose pace may be softer than that of my *destrier*."*

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* *Destrier*—war-horse.

"Surely," said the worthy churchman; "you shall have mine own ambling jennet, and I would it ambled as easy for your sake as that of the Abbot of Saint Albans. Yet this will I say for Malkin, for so I call her, that unless you were to borrow a ride on the juggler's steed that paces a hornpipe amongst the eggs, you could not go a journey on a creature so gentle and smooth-paced. I have composed many a homily on her back, to the edification of my brethren of the convent, and many poor Christian souls."

"I pray you, reverend father, let Malkin be got ready instantly, and bid Gurth attend me with mine arms."

"Nay, but fair sir, I pray you to remember that Malkin hath as little skill in arms as her master, and that I warrant not her enduring the sight or weight of your full panoply.—O, Malkin, I promise you, is a beast of judgment, and will contend against any undue weight—I did but borrow the *Fructus Temporum* from the priest of Saint Bees, and I promise you she would not stir from the gate until I had exchanged the huge volume for my breviary."

"Trust me, holy father," said Ivanhoe, "I will not distress her with too much weight; and if she calls a combat with me, it is odds but she has the worst."

This reply was made while Gurth was buckling on the Knight's heels a pair of large gilded spurs, capable of convincing any restive horse that his best safety lay in being conformable to the will of his rider.

The deep and sharp rowels with which Ivanhoe's heels were now armed, began to make the worthy Prior repent of his courtesy, and ejaculate,—"Nay, but fair sir, now I bethink me, my Malkin abideth not the spur—Better it were that you tarry for the mare of our manciple down at the Grange, which may be had in little more than an hour, and cannot but be tractable, in respect that she draweth much of our winter fire-wood, and eateth no corn."

"I thank you, reverend father, but will abide by your first offer, as I see Malkin is already led forth to the gate. Gurth shall carry mine armour; and for the rest, rely on it, that as I will

not overload Malkin's back, she shall not overcome my patience. And now, farewell!"

Ivanhoe now descended the stairs more hastily and easily than his wound promised, and threw himself upon the jennet, eager to escape the importunity of the Prior, who stuck as closely to his side as his age and fatness would permit, now singing the praises of Malkin, now recommending caution to the Knight in managing her.

"She is at the most dangerous period for maidens as well as mares," said the old man, laughing at his own jest, "being barely in her fifteenth year."

Ivanhoe, who had other web to weave than to stand canvassing a palfrey's paces with its owner, lent but a deaf ear to the Prior's grave advices and facetious jests, and having leapt on his mare, and commanded his squire, for such Gurth now called himself, to keep close by his side, he followed the track of the Black Knight into the forest, while the Prior stood at the gate of the convent looking after him, and ejaculating,—"Saint Mary! how prompt and fiery be these

men of war! I would I had not trusted Malkin to his keeping, for, crippled as I am with the cold rheum, I am undone if aught but good befalls her. And yet," said he, recollecting himself, "as I would not spare my own old and disabled limbs in the good cause of Old England, so Malkin must e'en run her hazard on the same venture; and it may be they will think our poor house worthy of some munificent guerdon—or, it may be, they will send the old Prior a pacing nag. And if they do none of these, as great men will forget little men's service, truly I shall hold me well repaid in doing that which is right. And it is now well nigh the fitting time to summon the brethren to breakfast in the refectory—Ah! I doubt they obey that call more cheerily than the bells for primes and mattins."

So the Prior of Saint Botolph's hobbled back again into the refectory, to preside over the stock-fish and ale, which was just serving out for the friars' breakfast. Pursy and important, he sat him down at the table, and many a dark word he threw out, of benefits to be expected to the

convent, and high deeds of service done by himself, which, at another season, would have attracted observation. But as the stock-fish was highly salted, and the ale reasonably powerful, the jaws of the brethren were too anxiously employed to admit of their making much use of their ears; nor do we read of any of the fraternity, who was tempted to speculate upon the mysterious hints of their Superior, except Father Diggory, who was severely afflicted by the tooth-ache, so that he could only eat on one side of his face.

In the meantime, the Black Champion and his guide were pacing at their leisure through the recesses of the forest; the good Knight whiles humming to himself the lay of some enamoured troubadour, sometimes encouraging by questions the prating disposition of his attendant, so that their dialogue formed a whimsical mixture of song and jest, of which we would fain give our readers some idea. You are then to imagine this Knight, such as we have already described him, strong of person, tall, broad-shouldered, and large of bone, mounted on his mighty black charger, which seemed made on purpose to bear his weight, so

easily he paced forward under it, having the visor of his helmet raised, so as to admit freedom of breath, yet keeping the beaver, or under part, closed, so that his features could be but imperfectly distinguished. But his ruddy embrowned cheek-bones could be plainly seen, and the large and bright blue eyes, that flashed with unusual keenness from under the dark shade of the raised visor; and the whole gesture and look of the champion expressed careless gaiety and fearless confidence—a mind which was unapt to apprehend danger, and prompt to defy it when most imminent—yet with whom danger was a familiar thought, as with one whose trade was war and adventure.

The Jester wore his usual fantastic habit, but late accidents had led him to adopt a good cutting falchion, instead of his wooden sword, with a targe to match it; of both which weapons he had, notwithstanding his profession, shewn himself a skilful master during the storming of Torquilstone. Indeed, the infirmity of Wamba's brain consisted chiefly in a kind of impatient irritability, which suffered him not long to remain patient in any posture, or adhere to any certain

train of ideas, although he was for a few minutes alert enough in performing any immediate task, or in apprehending any immediate topic. On horseback, therefore, he was perpetually swinging himself backwards and forwards, now on the horses' ears, then anon on the very rump of the animal,—now hanging both his legs on one side, and now sitting with his face to the tail, moping, mowing, and making a thousand apish gestures, until his palfrey took his freaks so much to heart, as fairly to lay him at length on the green grass—an incident which greatly amused the Knight, but compelled his companion to ride more steadily in future.

At the point of their journey at which we take them up, this joyous pair were engaged in singing a virelai, as it was called, in which the clown bore a stiff and mellow burthen, to the better instructed Knight of the Fetterlock. And thus run the ditty :—

Anna-Marie, love, up is the sun,
Anna-Marie, love, morn is begun,
Mists are dispersing, love, birds singing free,
Up in the morning, love, Anna-Marie.

Anna-Marie, love, up in the morn,
The hunter is winding blythe sounds on his horn,
The echo rings merry from rock and from tree,
'Tis time to arouse thee, love, Anna-Marie.

WAMBA.

O Tybalt, love, Tybalt, awake me not yet,
Around my soft pillow while softer dreams flit;
For what are the joys that in waking we prove,
Compared with these visions, O Tybalt, my love?
Let the birds to the rise of the mist carol shrill,
Let the hunter blow out his loud horn on the hill,
Softer sounds, softer pleasures in slumber I prove,—
But think not I dream'd of thee, Tybalt, my love.

"A dainty song," said Wamba, when they had finished their carol; "and I swear by my bauble, a pretty moral—I used to sing it with Gurth, once my play-fellow, and now, by the grace of God and his master, no less than a free man; and we once came by the cudgel for being so entranced by the melody, that we lay in bed two hours after sun-rise, singing the ditty betwixt sleeping and waking—my bones ache at thinking of the tune ever since. Nevertheless,

I have played the part of Anna-Marie, to please you, fair sir."

The Jester next struck into another carol, a sort of comic ditty, to which the Knight, catching up the tune, replied in the like manner.

KNIGHT and WAMBA.

There came three merry men from south, west, and north,
Ever more sing the roundelay;
To win the Widow of Wycombe forth,
And where was the widow might say them nay?

The first was a knight, and from Tynedale he came,
Ever more sing the roundelay;
And his fathers, God save us, were men of great fame,
And where was the widow might say him nay?

Of his father the laird, of his uncle the squire,
He boasted in rhime and in roundelay;
She bade him go bask by his sea-coal fire,
For she was the widow would say him nay.

WAMBA.

The next that came forth, swore by blood and by nails,
Merrily sing the roundelay;
Hur's a gentleman, God wot, and hur's lineage was of Wales,
And where was the widow might say him nay?

Sir David ap Morgan ap Griffith ap Hugh
  Ap Tudor ap Rhice, quoth his roundelay;
She said that one widow for so many was too few,
  And she bade the Welshman wend his way.

But then next came a yeoman, a yeoman of Kent,
  Jollily singing his roundelay;
He spoke to the widow of living and rent,
  And where was the widow could say him nay?

BOTH.

So the knight and the squire were both left in the myre,
  There for to sing their roundelay;
For a yeoman of Kent, with his yearly rent,
  There never was a widow could say him nay.

"I would, Wamba," said the Knight, "that our host of the Trysting-tree, or the jolly Friar, his chaplain, heard this ditty in praise of our bluff yeoman."

"So would not I," said Wamba—"but for the horn that hangs at your baldric."

"Ay," said the Knight,—"this is a pledge of Locksley's good will, though I am not like to need it. Three mots on this bugle will, I am

assured, bring round, at our need, a jolly band of yonder honest yeomen."

"I would say, Heaven forefend," said the Jester, "were it not that that fair gift is a pledge they would let us pass peaceably."

"Why, what meanest thou?" said the Knight; "thinkest thou that but for this pledge of fellowship they would assault us?"

"Nay, for me I say nothing," said Wamba; "for green trees have ears as well as stone walls. But canst thou construe me this, Sir Knight—When is thy wine-pitcher and thy purse better empty than full?"

"Why, never, I think," replied the Knight.

"Thou never deservest to have a full one in thy hand, for so simple an answer! Thou hadst best empty thy pitcher ere thou pass it to a Saxon, and leave thy money at home ere thou walk in the green-wood."

"You hold our friends for robbers, then?" said the Knight of the Fetterlock.

"You hear me not say so, fair sir," said Wamba; "it may relieve a man's steed to take off his mail when he hath a long journey to make; and

certes it may do good to his soul to ease him of that which is the root of evil; therefore will I give no hard names to those who do such services. Only I would wish my mail at home, and my purse in my chamber, when I meet with these good fellows, because it might save them some trouble."

"*We* are bound to pray for them, my friend, notwithstanding the fair character thou dost afford them."

"Pray for them with all my heart," said Wamba; "but in the town, not in the green-wood, like the Abbot of Saint Bees, whom they caused to say mass with an old hollow oak-tree for his stall."

"Say as thou list, Wamba," replied the Knight, "these yeomen did thy master Cedric yeomanly service at Torquilstone."

"Ay, truly," answered Wamba; "but that was in the fashion of their trade with Heaven."

"Their trade, Wamba! how mean you by that?" replied his companion.

"Marry, thus," said the Jester. "They make up a balanced account with Heaven, as our old

cellarer used to call his cyphering, as fair as Isaac the Jew keeps with his debtors, and, like him, give out a very little, and take large credit for doing so; reckoning, doubtless, on their own behalf the seven-fold usury which the blessed text hath promised to charitable loans."

"Give me an example of your meaning, Wamba,—I know nothing of cyphers or rates of usage," answered the Knight.

"Why," said Wamba, "an your valour be so dull, you will please to learn that those honest fellows balance a good deed with one not quite so laudable; as a crown given to a begging friar with an hundred bezants taken from a fat abbot, or a wench kissed in the green-wood with the relief of a poor widow."

"Which of these was the good deed, which was the felony?" interrupted the Knight.

"A good gibe! a good gibe!" said Wamba; "keeping witty company sharpeneth the apprehension. You said nothing so well, Sir Knight, I will be sworn, when you held drunken vespers with the bluff Hermit.—But to go on. The mer-

ry men of the forest set off the building of a cottage with the burning of a castle,—the thatching of a choir against the robbing of a church,—the setting free a poor prisoner against the murther of a proud sheriff—or, to come nearer our point, the deliverance of a Saxon Franklin against the burning alive of a Norman baron. Gentle thieves they are, in short, and courteous robbers; but it is ever the luckiest to meet with them when they are at the worst."

"How so, Wamba?" said the Knight.

"Why, then they have some compunction, and are for making up matters with Heaven. But when they have struck an even balance, Heaven help them with whom they next open the accompt! The travellers who first met them after their good service at Torquilstone would have a woeful flaying.—And yet," said Wamba, coming close up to the Knight's side, "there be companions who are far more dangerous for travellers to meet than yonder outlaws."

"And who may they be, for you have neither bears nor wolves, I trow?" said the Knight.

"Marry, sir, but we have Malvoisin's men-

at-arms," said Wamba; "and let me tell you, that, in time of civil war, a halfscore of these is worth a band of wolves at any time. They are now expecting their harvest, and are reinforced with the soldiers that escaped from Torquilstone. So that, should we meet with a band of them, we are like to pay for our feats of arms.—Now, I pray you, Sir Knight, what would you do if we met two of them?"

"Pin the villains to the earth with my lance, Wamba, if they offered us any impediment."

"But what if there were four of them?"

"They should drink of the same cup," answered the Knight.

"What if six," continued Wamba, "and we, as we now are, barely two—would you not remember Locksley's horn?"

"What! sound for aid," exclaimed the Knight, "against a score of such *rascaille* as these, whom one good knight could drive before him, as the wind drives the withered leaves!"

"Nay, then," said Wamba, "I will pray you for a close sight of that same horn that hath so powerful a breath."

The Knight undid the clasp of the baldrick, and indulged his fellow-traveller, who immediately hung the bugle round his own neck.

"Tra-lira-la," said he, whistling the notes; "nay, I know my gamut as well as another."

"How mean you, knave?" said the Knight; "restore me the bugle."

"Content you, Sir Knight, it is in safe keeping. When Valour and Folly travel, Folly should bear the horn, because she can blow the best."

"Nay but, rogue," said the Black Knight, "this exceedeth thy licence—Beware ye tamper not with my patience."

"Urge me not with violence, Sir Knight," said the Jester, keeping at a distance from the impatient champion, "or Folly will show a clean pair of heels, and leave Valour to find out his way through the wood as best he may."

"Nay, thou hast hit me there," said the Knight; "and, sooth to say, I have little time to jangle with thee. Keep the horn an thou wilt, but let us proceed on our journey."

"You will not harm me, then?" said Wamba.

"I tell thee no, thou knave!"

"Ay, but pledge me your knightly word for it," continued Wamba, as he approached with great caution.

"My knightly word I pledge; only come on with thy foolish self."

"Nay, then, Valour and Folly are once more boon companions," said the Jester, coming up frankly to the Knight's side; "but, in truth, I love not such buffets as that you bestowed on the burley Friar, when his holiness rolled on the green like a king of the nine-pins. And, now that Folly wears the horn, let Valour rouse himself, and shake his mane; for, if I mistake not, there are company in yonder brake that are on the look-out for us."

"What makes thee judge so?" said the Knight.

"Because I have twice or thrice noticed the glance of a morrion from amongst the green leaves. Had they been honest men, they had kept the path. But yonder thicket is a choice chapel for the Clerks to Saint Nicholas."

"By my faith," said the Knight, closing his visor, "I think thou be'st in the right on't."

And in good time did he close it, for three arrows flew at the same instant from the suspected spot against his head and breast, one of which would have penetrated to the brain, had it not been turned aside by the steel visor. The other two were averted by the gorget, and by the shield which hung around his neck.

"Thanks, trusty armourer," said the Knight.—"Wamba, let us close with them,"—and he rode straight to the thicket. He was met by six or seven men-at-arms, who run against him with their lances at full career. Three of the weapons struck against him, and splintered with as little effect as if they had been driven against a tower of steel. The Black Knight's eyes seemed to flash fire even through the aperture of his visor. He raised himself in his stirrups with an air of inexpressible dignity, and exclaimed, "What means this, my masters!"—The men made no other reply than by drawing their swords and attacking him on every side, crying, "Die, tyrant!"

"Ha! Saint Edward! Ha! Saint George!" said the Black Knight, striking down a man at every invocation; "have we traitors here?"

The assailants, desperate as they were, bore back from an arm which carried death in every blow, and it seemed as if the terror of his single strength was about to gain the battle against such odds, when a knight, in blue armour, who had hitherto kept himself behind the other assailants, spurred forward with his lance, and taking aim, not at the rider but at the steed, wounded the noble animal mortally.

"That was a felon stroke!" exclaimed the Black Knight, as the steed fell to the earth, bearing his rider along with him.

And at this moment, Wamba winded the bugle, for the whole had passed so speedily, that he had not time to do so sooner. The sudden sound made the murderers bear back once more, and Wamba, though so imperfectly weaponed, did not hesitate to rush in and assist the Black Knight to arise.

"Shame on ye, false cowards!" exclaimed the Knight, who seemed to lead the assailants; "do ye fly from the empty blast of a horn blown by a Jester?"

Animated by his words, they attacked the

Knight anew, whose best refuge was now to place his back against an oak, and defend himself with his sword. The felon Knight, who had taken another spear, watching the moment when his formidable antagonist was most closely pressed, galloped against him in hopes to nail him with his lance against the tree, when his purpose was again intercepted by Wamba. The Jester, making up by agility the want of strength, and little noticed by the men-at-arms who were busied in their more important object, hovered on the skirts of the fight, and effectually checked the fatal career of the Blue Knight, by ham-stringing his horse with a stroke of his sword. Horse and man went to the ground; yet the situation of the Knight of the Fetterlock continued very precarious, as he was pressed close by several men completely armed, and began to be fatigued by the violent exertions necessary to defend himself on so many points at nearly the same moment, when a gray-goose shaft suddenly stretched on the earth one of the most formidable of his assailants, and a band of yeomen broke forth from the glade, headed by Locksley and the jovial Friar,

who, taking ready and effectual part in the fray, soon disposed of the assailants, all of whom lay on the spot dead or mortally wounded. The Black Knight thanked his deliverers with a dignity they had not observed in his former bearing, which hitherto seemed rather that of a blunt bold soldier, than of a person of exalted rank.

"It concerns me much," he said, "even before I express my full gratitude to my ready friends, to discover, if I may, who have been my unprovoked enemies.—Open the visor of that Blue Knight, Wamba, who seems the chief of these villains."

The Jester instantly made up to the leader of the assassins, who, bruised by his fall, and entangled under the wounded steed, lay incapable either of flight or resistance.

"Come, valiant sir," said Wamba, "I must be your armourer as well as your equerry—I have dismounted you, and now I will unhelm you."

So saying, with no very gentle hand he undid the helmet of the Blue Knight, which, rolling to

a distance on the grass, displayed to the Knight of the Fetterlock grizzled locks, and a countenance he did not expect to have seen under such circumstances.

"Waldemar Fitzurse!" he said in astonishment; "what could urge one of thy rank and seeming worth to so foul an undertaking?"

"Richard," said the captive Knight, looking up to him, "thou knowest little of mankind, if thou knowest not to what ambition and revenge can lead every child of Adam."

"Revenge?" answered the Black Knight; "I never wronged thee—On me thou hast nought to revenge."

"My daughter, Richard, whose alliance thou didst scorn—was that no injury to a Norman, whose blood is noble as thine own?"

"Thy daughter!" replied the Black Knight; "a proper cause of enmity, and followed up to a bloody issue.—Stand back, my masters, I would speak to him alone.—And now, Waldemar Fitzurse, say me the truth—confess who set thee on this traitorous deed."

"Thy father's son," answered Waldemar,

"who, in so doing, did but avenge on thee thy disobedience to thy father."

Richard's eyes sparkled with indignation, but his better nature overcame it. He pressed his hand against his brow, and remained an instant gazing on the face of the humbled baron, in whose features pride was contending with shame

"Thou dost not ask thy life, Waldemar, said the King.

"He that is in the lion's clutch," answered Fitzurse, "knows it were needless."

"Take it then unasked," said Richard; "the lion preys not on prostrate carcasses—Take thy life, but with this condition, that in three days thou shalt leave England, and go to hide thine infamy in thy Norman castle, and that thou wilt never mention the name of John of Anjou as connected with thy felony. If thou art found on English ground after the space I have allotted thee, thou diest—or if thou breathest aught that can attaint the honour of my house, by Saint George! not the altar itself shall be a sanctuary. I will hang thee out to feed the ravens, from the very

pinnacle of thine own castle.—Let this knight have a steed, Locksley, for I see your yeomen have caught those which were running loose, and let him depart unharmed."

"But that I judge I listen to a voice whose behests must not be disputed," answered the yeoman, "I would send a shaft after the skulking villain that should spare him the labour of a long journey."

"Thou bearest an English heart, Locksley," said the Black Knight, "and well dost judge thou art the more bound to obey my behest—I am Richard of England!"

At these words, pronounced in a tone of majesty suited to the high rank, and no less distinguished character, of Cœur de Lion, the yeomen at once kneeled down before him, and at the same time tendered their allegiance, and implored pardon for their offences.

"Rise, my friends," said Richard, in a gracious tone, looking on them with a countenance in which his habitual good humour had already conquered the blaze of hasty resentment, and

whose features retained no mark of the late desperate conflict, excepting the flush arising from exertion,—"Arise," he said, "my friends!—Your misdemeanours, whether in forest or field, have been atoned by the loyal services you rendered my distressed subjects before the walls of Torquilstone, and the rescue you have this day afforded to your sovereign. Arise, my liegemen, and be good subjects in future.—And thou, brave Locksley"——

"Call me no longer Locksley, my liege, but know me under the name, which, I fear, fame hath blown too widely not to have reached even your royal ears—I am Robin Hood, of Sherwood Forest."

"King of Outlaws, and Prince of good fellows!" said the King, "who hath not heard a name that has been borne as far as Palestine? But be assured, brave Outlaw, that no deed done in our absence, and in the turbulent times to which it hath given rise, shall be remembered to thy disadvantage."

"True says the proverb," said Wamba, inter-

posing his word, but with some abatement of his usual petulance,—

"When the cat is away,
The mice will play."

"What, Wamba, art thou there?" said Richard; "I have been so long of hearing thy voice, I thought thou hadst taken the flight."

"I the flight!" said Wamba; "when do you ever find Folly separated from Valour? There lies the trophy of my sword, that good grey gelding, whom I heartily wish upon his legs again, conditioning his master lay houghed there in his place. It is true, I gave a little ground at first, for a motley jacket does not brook lance-heads as a steel doublet will. But if I fought not at sword's point, you will grant me that I sounded the onset."

"And to good purpose, honest Wamba," replied the King. "Thy good service shall not be forgotten."

"*Confiteor! Confiteor!*"—exclaimed, in a submissive tone, a voice near the King's side—"my

Latin will carry me no farther—but I confess my deadly treason, and pray leave to have absolution before I am led to execution."

Richard looked around, and beheld the jovial Friar on his knees, telling his rosary, while his quarter-staff, which had not been idle during the skirmish, lay on the grass beside him. His countenance was gathered so as he thought might best express the most profound contrition, his eyes being turned up, and the corners of his mouth drawn down, as Wamba expressed it, like the tassels at the mouth of a purse. Yet this demure affectation of extreme penitence was whimsically belied by a ludicrous meaning which lurked in his huge features, and seemed to pronounce his fear and repentance alike hypocritical.

"For what art thou cast down, mad Priest?" said Richard; "Art thou afraid thy diocesan should learn how truly thou doest serve Our Lady and Saint Dunstan?—Tush, man! fear it not; Richard of England betrays no secrets that pass over the flagon."

"Nay, most gracious sovereign," answered

the Hermit, (well known to the curious in penny-histories of Robin Hood, by the name of Friar Tuck,) "it is not the crosier I fear, but the sceptre.—Alas! that my sacrilegious fist should ever have been applied to the ear of the Lord's anointed!"

"Ha! ha!" said Richard, "sits the wind there?—In truth, I had forgotten the buffet, though mine ear sung after it for a whole day. But if the cuff was fairly given, I will be judged by the good men around, if it was not as well repaid—or, if thou thinkest I still owe thee aught, and will stand forth for another counter-buff"——

"By no means," replied Friar Tuck, "I had mine own returned, and with usury—may your Majesty ever pay your debts as fully!"

"If I could do so with cuffs," said the King, "my creditors should have little reason to complain of an empty exchequer."

"And yet," said the Friar, resuming his demure hypocritical countenance, "I know not what penance I ought to perform for that most sacrilegious blow!"

"Speak no more of it, brother," said the King; "after having stood so many cuffs from Paynims and misbelievers, I were void of reason to quarrel with the buffet of a Clerk so holy as he of Copmanhurst. Yet, mine honest Friar, I think it would be best both for the church and thyself, that I should procure a licence to unfrock thee, and retain thee as a yeoman of our guard, serving in care of our person, as formerly upon the altar of Saint Dunstan."

"My Liege," said the Friar, "I humbly crave your pardon; and you would readily grant my excuse, did you but know how the sin of laziness has beset me. Saint Dunstan—may he be gracious to us!—stands quiet in his niche, though I should forget my orisons in killing a fat buck—I stay out of my cell sometimes a night, doing I wot not what—Saint Dunstan never complains—a quiet master he is, and a peaceful, as ever was made of wood.—But to be a yeoman in attendance on my sovereign the king—the honour is great, doubtless—yet, if I were but to step aside to comfort a widow in one corner, or to kill a deer in another, it would be, 'where is the dog

Priest ?' says one. 'Who has seen the accursed Tuck ?' says another. 'The unfrocked villain destroys more venison than half the country besides,' says one keeper ; 'And is hunting after every shy doe in the country !' a second.—In fine, good my Liege, I pray you to leave me as you found me, or, if in aught you desire to extend your benevolence to me, that I may be considered as the poor Clerk of Saint Dunstan's cell in Copmanhurst, to whom any small donation will be most thankfully acceptable."

"I understand thee," said the King, "and the Holy Clerk shall have a grant of vert and venison in my woods of Warncliffe. Mark, however, I will but assign thee three bucks every season ; but if that do not prove an apology for thy slaying thirty, I am no Christian knight or true king."

"Your Grace may be well assured," said the Friar, "that, with the grace of Saint Dunstan, I shall find the way of multiplying your most bounteous gift."

"I nothing doubt it, good brother," said the King ; "and as venison is but dry food, our cel-

larer shall have orders to deliver to thee a butt of sack, a runlet of Malvesie, and three hogsheads of ale of the first strike, yearly—If that will not quench thy thirst, thou must come to court, and become acquainted with my butler."

"But for Saint Dunstan?" said the Friar—

"A cope, a stole, and altar-cloth shalt thou also have," continued the King, crossing himself—"But we may not turn our game into earnest, lest God punish us for thinking more on our follies than on his honour and worship."

"I will answer for my patron," said the Priest, joyously.

"Answer for thyself, Friar," said King Richard, something sternly; but immediately stretching out his hand to the Hermit, the latter, somewhat abashed, bent his knee and saluted it. "Thou dost less honour to my extended palm than to my clenched fist," said the Monarch; "thou didst only kneel to the one, and to the other didst prostrate thyself."

But the Friar, afraid perhaps of again giving offence by continuing the conversation in too jocose a style,—a false step to be particularly guard-

ed against by those who converse with monarchs—bowed profoundly, and fell into the rear.

At the same time, two additional personages appeared on the scene.

CHAPTER XI.

All hail to the lordings of high degree,
Who live not more happy, though greater than we!
Our pastimes to see,
Under every green tree
In all the gay woodland, right welcome ye be.
MACDONALD.

THE new comers were Wilfrid of Ivanhoe, on the Prior of Botolph's palfrey, and Gurth, who attended him, on the Knight's own war-horse. The astonishment of Ivanhoe was beyond bounds, when he saw his master besprinkled with blood, and six or seven dead bodies lying around in the little glade in which the battle had taken place. Nor was he less surprised to see Richard surrounded by so many sylvan attendants, the outlaws, as they seemed to be, of the forest, and a perilous retinue therefore for a prince. He hesitated whether to address the King as the Black

Knight-errant, or in what other manner to demean himself towards him. Richard saw his embarrassment.

"Fear not, Wilfrid," he said, "to address Richard Plantagenet as himself, since thou seest him in the company of true English hearts, although it may be they have been urged a few steps aside by warm English blood."

"Sir Wilfrid of Ivanhoe," said the gallant Outlaw, stepping forward, "my assurances can add nothing to those of our sovereign; yet, let me say somewhat proudly, that of men who have suffered much, he hath not truer subjects than those who now stand around him."

"I cannot doubt it, brave man," said Wilfrid, "since thou art of the number—But what mean these marks of death and danger? these slain men, and the bloody armour of my Prince?"

"Treason hath been with us, Ivanhoe," said the King; "but, thanks to these brave men, treason hath met its meed—But, now I bethink me, thou too art a traitor," said Richard, smiling; "a most disobedient traitor; for were not our

orders positive, that thou should'st repose thyself at Saint Botolph's until thy wound was healed?"

"It is healed," said Ivanhoe; "it is not of more consequence than the scratch of a bodkin. But why, oh why, noble Prince, will you thus vex the hearts of thy faithful servants, and expose your life by lonely journies and rash adventures, as if it were of no more value than that of a mere knight-errant, who has no interest on earth but what lance and sword may procure him?"

"And Richard Plantagenet," said the King, "desires no more fame than his good lance and sword may acquire him—and Richard Plantagenet is prouder of achieving an adventure, with only his good sword, and his good arm to speed, than if he led to battle an host of an hundred thousand armed men."

"But your kingdom, my lord," said Ivanhoe, "your kingdom is threatened with dissolution and civil war—your subjects menaced with every species of evil, if deprived of their sovereign in some of these dangers which it is your daily pleasure to incur, and from which you have but this moment narrowly escaped."

"Ho! ho! my kingdom and my subjects?" answered Richard, impatiently; "I tell thee, Sir Wilfrid, the best of them are most willing to repay my follies in kind—For example, my very faithful servant, Wilfrid of Ivanhoe, will not obey my positive commands, and yet reads his king a homily, because he does not walk exactly to his advice. Which of us has most reason to upbraid the other?—Yet forgive me, my faithful Wilfrid. The time I have spent, and am yet to spend in concealment, is, as I explained to thee at Saint Botolph's, necessary to give my friends and faithful nobles time to assemble their forces, that when Richard's return is announced, he should be at the head of such a force as enemies shall tremble to face, and thus subdue the meditated treason, without even unsheathing a sword. Estoteville and Bohun will not be strong enough to move forward to York for twenty-four hours. I must have news of Salisbury from the south; and of Beauchamp, in Warwickshire; and of Multon and Percy, in the north. The Chancellor must make sure of London. Too sudden an appearance would subject me to dangers, other

than my lance and sword, though backed by the bow of Bold Robin, or the quarter staff of Friar Tuck, and the horn of the sage Wamba, may be able to rescue me from"——

Wilfrid bowed in submission, well knowing how vain it was to contend with the wild spirit of chivalry which so often impelled his master upon dangers which he might easily have avoided, or rather, which it was unpardonable in him to have sought out.

Wilfrid sighed, therefore, and held his peace; while Richard, rejoiced at having silenced his counsellor, though his heart acknowledged the justice of the charge he had brought against him, went on in conversation with Robin Hood.—"King of Outlaws," he said, "have you no refreshment to offer to your brother sovereign? for these dead knaves have found me both in exercise and appetite."

"In troth," replied the Outlaw, "for I scorn to lie to your Grace, our larder is chiefly supplied with"—— He stopped, and was somewhat embarrassed.

"With venison, I suppose," said Richard, gaily; "better food at need there can be none—and truly, if a king will not remain at home and slay his own game, methinks he should not brawl too loud if he finds it killed to his hand."

"If your Grace, then," said Robin, "will again honour with your presence one of Robin Hood's places of rendezvous, the venison shall not be lacking; and a stoup of ale, and it may be a cup of reasonably good wine, to relish it withal."

The Outlaw accordingly led the way, followed by the buxom Monarch, more happy probably in this chance meeting with Robin Hood and his foresters, than he would have been in again assuming his royal state, and presiding over a splendid circle of peers and nobles. Novelty in society and adventure were the zest of life to Richard Cœur-de-Lion, and it had its highest relish when enhanced by dangers encountered and surmounted. In the lion-hearted King, the brilliant, but useless character, of a knight of romance, was in a great measure realized; and the personal glory which he acquired by his own deeds of arms, was far more dear to his excited

imagination than that which a course of policy and wisdom would have spread around his government. Accordingly, his reign was like the course of a brilliant and rapid meteor, which shoots along the face of heaven, shedding around an unnecessary and portentous light, which is instantly swallowed up by universal darkness; his feats of chivalry furnishing themes for bards and minstrels, but affording none of those solid benefits to his country on which history loves to pause, and hold up as an example to posterity. But in his present company, Richard shewed to the greatest imaginable advantage. He was gay, good-humoured, and fond of manhood in every rank of life.

Beneath a huge oak-tree the sylvan repast was hastily prepared for the King of England, surrounded by men late outlaws to his government, but who now formed his court and his guard. As the flagon passed round, the rough foresters soon lost their awe for the presence of majesty. The song and the jest were exchanged—the stories of former deeds were told with advantage; and at length, and while boasting of their suc-

cessful infraction of the laws, no one recollected they were speaking in presence of their natural guardian. The merry King, nothing heeding his dignity any more than his company, laughed, quaffed, and jested among the jolly band. The natural and rough sense of Robin Hood led him to be desirous that the scene should be closed ere anything should occur to disturb its harmony, the more especially that he observed Ivanhoe's brow clouded with anxiety. "We are honoured," he said to the Baron, apart, "by the presence of our gallant Sovereign; yet I would not that he dallied with time, which the circumstances of his kingdom may render precious."

"It is well and wisely spoken, brave Robin Hood," said the Knight; "and know, moreover, that they who jest with majesty, even in its gayest mood, are but toying with the lion's whelp, which, on slight provocation, uses both fangs and claws."

"You have touched the very cause of my fear," said the Outlaw; "my men are rough by practice and nature, the King is hasty as well as good-humoured; nor know I how soon cause of

offence may arise, or how warmly it may be received—it is time this revel were broken off."

"It must be by your management then, gallant yeoman," said Ivanhoe; "for each hint I have essayed to give him serves only to induce him to prolong it."

"Must I so soon risk the pardon and favour of my sovereign?" said Robin Hood, pausing for an instant; "but by Saint Christopher, it shall be so. I were undeserving his grace did I not peril it for his good.—Here, Scathlock, get thee behind yonder thicket, and wind me a Norman blast on thy bugle, and without an instant's delay, on peril of your life."

Scathlock obeyed his captain, and in less than five minutes the revellers were startled by the sound of his horn.

"It is the bugle of Malvoisin," said the Miller, starting to his feet, and seizing his bow. The Friar dropped the flagon, and grasped his quarter-staff. Wamba stopt short in the midst of a jest, and betook himself to sword and target. All the others stood to their weapons.

Men of their precarious course of life change

readily from the banquet to the battle; and, to Richard, the exchange seemed but a succession of pleasure. He called for his helmet and the most cumbrous parts of his armour, which he had laid aside; and while Gurth was putting them on, he laid his strict injunctions on Wilfrid, under pain of his highest displeasure, not to engage in the skirmish which he supposed was approaching.

"Thou hast fought for me an hundred times, Wilfrid,—and I have seen it. Thou shalt this day look on, and see how Richard will fight for his friend and liegeman."

In the mean time, Robin Hood had sent off several of his followers in different directions, as if to reconnoitre the enemy; and when he saw the company effectually broken up, he approached Richard, who was now completely armed, and, kneeling down on one knee, craved pardon of his sovereign.

"For what, good yeoman?" said Richard, somewhat impatiently. "Have we not already granted thee a full pardon for all transgressions? Thinkest thou our word is a feather, to be blown

backward and forward between us? Thou canst not have had time to commit any new offence since that time?"

"Ay, but I have though," answered the yeoman, "if it be an offence to deceive my prince for his own advantage. The bugle you have heard was none of Malvoisin's, but blown by my direction, to break off the banquet, lest it trenched upon hours of dearer import than to be thus dallied with."

He then rose from his knee, folded his arms on his bosom, and, in a manner rather respectful than submissive, awaited the answer of the King,—like one who is conscious he may have given offence, yet is confident in the rectitude of his motive. The blood rushed in anger to the countenance of Richard; but it was the first transient emotion, and his sense of justice instantly subdued it.

"The King of Sherwood," he said, "grudges his venison and his wine-flask to the King of England? It is well, bold Robin!—but when you come to see me in merry London, I trust to be a less niggard host. Thou art right, however, good fellow. Let us therefore to horse

and away—Wilfrid has been impatient this hour. Tell me, bold Robin, hast thou never a friend in thy band, who, not content with advising, will needs direct thy motions, and look miserable when thou dost presume to act for thyself?"

"Such a one," said Robin, "is my Lieutenant, Little John, who is even now absent on an expedition as far as the borders of Scotland; and I will own to your Majesty, that I am sometimes displeased by the freedom of his councils—but, when I think twice, I cannot be long angry with one who can have no motive for his anxiety save zeal for his master's service."

"Thou art right, good yeoman," answered Richard; "and if I had Ivanhoe, on the one hand, to give grave advice, and recommend it by the sad gravity of his brow, and thee, on the other, to trick me into what thou thinkest my own good, I should have as little the freedom of mine own will as any king in Christendom or Heathenesse.—But, come, sirs, let us merrily on to Conninsburgh, and think no more on't."

Robin Hood assured them that he had detached a party in the direction of the road they were

to pass, who would not fail to discover and apprize them of any secret ambuscade; and that he had little doubt they would find the ways secure, or, if otherwise, would receive such timely notice of the danger as would enable them to fall back on a strong troop of archers, with which he himself proposed to follow on the same route.

The wise and attentive precautions adopted for his safety touched Richard's feelings, and removed any slight grudge which he might retain on account of the deception the Outlaw Captain had practised upon him. He once more extended his hand to Robin Hood, assured him of his full pardon and future favour, as well as his firm resolution to restrain the tyrannical exercise of the forest rights, and other oppressive laws, by which so many English yeomen were driven into a state of rebellion. But Richard's good intentions towards the bold Outlaw were frustrated by the King's untimely death; and the Charter of the Forest was extorted from the unwilling hands of King John when he succeeded to his heroic brother. As for the rest of Robin Hood's career, as well as the tale of his treacher-

ous death, they are to be found in those black-letter garlands, once sold at the low and easy rate of one halfpenny,

"Now cheaply purchased at their weight in gold."

The Outlaw's opinion proved true; and the King, attended by Ivanhoe, Gurth, and Wamba, arrived, without any interruption, within view of the Castle of Conningsburgh, while the sun was yet in the horizon.

There are few more beautiful or striking scenes in England, than are presented by the vicinity of this ancient Saxon fortress. The soft and gentle river Don sweeps through an amphitheatre, in which cultivation is richly blended with woodland, and on a mount, ascending from the river, well defended by walls and ditches, rises this ancient edifice, which, as its Saxon name implies, was, previous to the Conquest, a royal residence of the kings of England. The outer walls have probably been added by the Normans, but the inner keep bears token of very great antiquity. It is situated on a mount at one angle of the inner

court, and forms a complete circle of perhaps twenty-five feet in diameter. The wall is of immense thickness, and is propped or defended by six huge external buttresses which project from the circle, and rise up against the sides of the tower as if to strengthen or to support it. These massive buttresses are hollowed out towards the top, and terminate in a sort of turrets communicating with the interior of the keep itself. The distant appearance of this huge building, with these singular accompaniments, is as interesting to the lovers of the picturesque, as the interior of the castle is to the eager antiquary, whose imagination it carries back to the days of the heptarchy. A burrow, in the vicinity of the castle, is pointed out as the tomb of the memorable Hengist; and various monuments, of great antiquity and curiosity, are shewn in the neighbouring church-yard.

When Cœur de Lion and his retinue approached this rude yet stately building, it was not, as at present, surrounded by external fortifications. The Saxon architect had exhausted his art in rendering the main keep defensible, and there was

no other circumvallation than a rude barrier of palisades.

A huge black banner, which floated from the top of the tower, announced that the obsequies of the late owner were still in the act of being solemnized. It bore no emblem of the deceased's birth or quality, for armorial bearings were then a novelty among the Norman chivalry themselves, and were totally unknown to the Saxons. But above the gate was another banner, on which the figure of a white horse, rudely painted, indicated the nation and rank of the deceased, by the well known symbol of Hengist and his warriors.

All around the castle was a scene of busy commotion; for such funeral banquets were a time of general and profuse hospitality, which not only every one who could claim the most distant connection with the deceased, but all passengers whatsoever, were invited to partake. The wealth and consequence of the deceased Athelstane, occasioned this custom to be observed in the fullest extent.

Numerous parties, therefore, were seen ascend-

ing and descending the hill on which the castle was situated; and when the king and his attendants entered the open and unguarded gates of the external barrier, the space within presented a scene not easily reconciled with the cause of the assemblage. In one place cooks were toiling to roast huge oxen, and fat sheep; in another, hogsheads of ale were set abroach, to be drained at the freedom of all comers. Groupes of every description were to be seen devouring the food and swallowing the liquor thus abandoned to their discretion. The naked Saxon serf was drowning the sense of his half year's hunger and thirst, in one day of gluttony and drunkenness—the more pampered burgess and guild-brother was eating his morsel with gust, or curiously criticizing the quantity of the malt and the skill of the brewer. Some few of the poorer Norman gentry might also be seen, distinguished by their shaven chins and short cloaks, and not less so by their keeping together, and looking with great scorn on the whole solemnity, even while condescending to avail themselves of the good cheer which was so liberally supplied.

Mendicants were of course assembled by the score, together with strolling soldiers returned from Palestine (according to their own account at least); pedlars were displaying their wares, travelling mechanics were enquiring after employment, and wandering palmers, hedge-priests, Saxon minstrels, and Welch bards, were muttering prayers, and extracting mistuned dirges from their harps, crowds,* and rotes. One sent forth the praises of Athelstane in a doleful panegyric; another, in a Saxon genealogical poem, rehearsed the uncouth and harsh names of his noble ancestry. Jesters and jugglers were not awanting, nor was the occasion of the assembly supposed to render the exercise of their profession indecorous or improper. Indeed the ideas of the Saxons on these occasions were as natural as they were rude. If sorrow was thirsty, there was drink—if hungry, there was food—if it sunk

* The crowth or crowd was a species of violin. The rote a sort of guitar, the strings of which were managed by a kind of wheel, from which the instrument took its name.

down upon and saddened the heart, here were the means supplied of mirth, or at least of amusement. Nor did the assistants scorn to avail themselves of those means of consolation, although, every now and then, as if suddenly recollecting the cause which had brought them together, the men groaned in unison, while the females, of whom many were present, raised up their voices and shrieked for very woe.

Such was the scene in the castle-yard at Coningsburgh when it was entered by Richard and his followers. The seneschal or steward, who deigned not to take notice of the groups of inferior guests who were perpetually entering and withdrawing, unless so far as was necessary to preserve order, was struck by the good mien of the Monarch and Ivanhoe, more especially as he imagined the features of the latter were familiar to him. Besides, the approach of two knights, for such their dress bespoke them, was a rare event at a Saxon solemnity, and could not but be regarded as a sort of honour to the deceased and his family. And in his sable dress, and holding in his hand his white wand of office, this

important personage made way through the miscellaneous assemblage of guests, thus conducting Richard and Ivanhoe to the entrance of the tower. Gurth and Wamba speedily found acquaintances in the court-yard, nor presumed to intrude themselves any farther until their presence should be required.

CHAPTER XII.

I found them winding of Marcello's corpse.
And there was such a solemn melody,
'Twixt doleful songs, tears, and sad elegies,—
Such as old grandames, watching by the dead,
Are wont to outwear the night with.——

Old Play.

THE mode of entering the great tower of Coningsburgh Castle is very peculiar, and partakes of the rude simplicity of the early times in which it was erected. A flight of steps, so deep and narrow as to be almost precipitous, leads up to a low portal in the south side of the tower, by which the adventurous antiquary may still, or at least could a few years since, gain access to a small stair within the thickness of the main wall of the tower, which leads up to the third storey of the building,—the two lower being dungeons or vaults, which neither receive air nor light,

save by a square hole in the third storey, with which they seem to have communicated by a ladder. The access to the upper apartments in the tower, which consist in all of four stories, is given by stairs which are carried up through the external buttresses.

By this difficult and complicated entrance the good King Richard, followed by his faithful Ivanhoe, was ushered into the round apartment which occupies the whole of the third storey from the ground. The latter had time to muffle his face in his mantle, as it had been held expedient that he should not present himself to his father until the King should give him the signal.

There were assembled in this apartment, around a large oaken table, about a dozen of the most distinguished representatives of the Saxon families in the adjacent counties. These were all old, or, at least, elderly men; for the younger race, to the great displeasure of the seniors, had, like Ivanhoe, broken down many of the barriers which had separated for half a century the Norman victors from the vanquished Saxons. The downcast and sorrowful looks of these venerable

men, their silence and their mournful posture, formed a strong contrast to the levity of the revellers on the outside of the castle. Their grey locks and long full beards, together with their antique tunics and loose black mantles, suited well with the singular and rude apartment in which they were seated, and gave the appearance of a band of ancient worshippers of Woden, recalled to life to mourn over the decay of their national glory.

Cedric, seated in equal rank among his countrymen, seemed yet, by common consent, to act as chief of the assembly. Upon the entrance of Richard (only known to him as the valorous Knight of the Fetterlock) he arose gravely, and gave him welcome by the ordinary salutation, *Waes hael*, raising at the same time a goblet to his head. The King, no stranger to the customs of his English subjects, returned the greeting with the appropriate words, *Drinc heal*, and partook of a cup which was handed to him by the sewer. The same courtesy was offered to Ivanhoe, who pledged his father in silence, supplying

the usual speech by an inclination of his head, lest his voice should have been recognized.

When this introductory ceremony was performed, Cedric arose, and, extending his hand to Richard, conducted him into a small and very rude chapel, which was excavated, as it were, out of one of the external buttresses. As there was no opening, saving a very narrow loop-hole, the place would have been nearly quite dark but for two flambeaux or torches, which shewed, by a red and smoky light, the arched roof and naked walls, the rude altar of stone, and the crucifix of the same material.

Before this altar was placed a bier, and on each side of this bier kneeled three priests, who told their beads, and muttered their prayers, with the greatest signs of external devotion. For this service a splendid *soul-scat* was paid to the convent of Saint Edmund's by the mother of the deceased; and, that it might be fully deserved, the whole brethren, saving the lame sacristan, had transferred themselves to Conningsburgh, where, while six of their number were constantly on

guard in the performance of divine rites by the bier of Athelstane, the others failed not to take their share of the refreshments and amusements which went on at the castle. In maintaining this pious watch and ward, the good monks were particularly careful not to interrupt their hymns for an instant, lest Zernebock, the ancient Saxon Apollyon, should lay his clutches on the departed Athelstane. Nor were they less careful to prevent any unhallowed layman from touching the pall, which, having been that used at the funeral of Saint Edmund, was liable to be desecrated, if handled by prophane hands. If, in truth, these attentions could be of any use to the deceased, he had some right to expect them at the hands of the brethren of Saint Edmund's, since, besides an hundred mancus's of gold paid down as the soul-ransom, the mother of Athelstane had announced her intention of endowing that foundation with the better part of the lands of the deceased, in order to maintain perpetual prayers for his soul, and that of her departed husband.

Richard and Wilfrid followed the Saxon Cedric into the apartment of death, where, as their guide pointed with solemn air to the untimely bier of Athelstane, they followed his example in devoutly crossing themselves, and muttering a brief prayer for the weal of the departed soul.

This act of pious charity performed, Cedric again motioned them to follow him, gliding over the stone floor with a noiseless tread; and, after ascending a few steps, opened with great caution the door of a small oratory, which adjoined to the chapel. It was about eight feet square, hollowed, like the chapel itself, out of the thickness of the wall; and the loop-hole, which enlightened it, being to the west, and widening considerably as it sloped inward, a beam of the setting sun found its way into its dark recess, and shewed a female of a dignified mien, and whose countenance retained the marked remains of majestic beauty. Her long mourning robes, and her flowing wimple of black cypress, enhanced the whiteness of her skin, and the beauty of her light-coloured and flowing tresses, which time had neither thinned nor mingled with silver. Her counte-

nance expressed the deepest sorrow that is consistant with resignation. On the stone table before her stood a crucifix of ivory, beside which was laid a missal, having its pages richly illuminated, and its boards adorned with clasps of gold, and bosses of the same precious metal.

"Noble Edith," said Cedric, after having stood a moment silent, as if to give Richard and Wilfrid time to look upon the lady of the mansion, "these are worthy strangers, come to take a part in thy sorrows. And this, in especial, is the valiant Knight, who fought so bravely for the deliverance of him for whom we this day mourn."

"His bravery has my thanks," returned the lady; "although it be the will of Heaven that it should be displayed in vain. I thank, too, his courtesy, and that of his companion, which hath brought them hither to behold the widow of Adeling, the mother of Athelstane, in her deep hour of sorrow and lamentation. To your care, kind kinsman, I entrust them, satisfied that they will want no hospitality which these sad walls can yet afford."

The guests bowed deeply to the mourning parent, and withdrew with their hospitable guide.

Another winding stair conducted them to an apartment of the same size with that which they had first entered, occupying indeed the storey immediately above. From this room, ere yet the door was opened, proceeded a low and melancholy strain of vocal music. When they entered, they found themselves in the presence of about twenty matrons and maidens of distinguished Saxon lineage. Four maidens, Rowena leading the choir, raised a hymn for the soul of the deceased, of which we have only been able to decypher two or three stanzas :—

Dust unto dust,
To this all must;
The tenant hath resign'd
The faded form
To waste and worm—
Corruption claims her kind.

Through paths unknown
Thy soul hath flown,
To seek the realms of woe,

Where fiery pain
Shall purge the stain
Of actions done below.

In that sad place,
By Mary's grace,
Brief may thy dwelling be!
Till prayers and alms,
And holy psalms,
Shall set the captive free.

While this dirge was sung, in a low and melancholy tone, by the female choristers, the others were divided into two bands, of which one was engaged in bedecking, with such embroidery as their skill and taste could compass, a large silken pall, destined to cover the bier of Athelstane, while the others busied themselves in selecting, from baskets of flowers placed before them, garlands, which they destined for the same mournful purpose. The behaviour of the maidens was decorous, if not marked with deep affliction; but now and then a whisper or a smile called forth the rebuke of the severer matrons, and here and

there might be seen a damsel more interested in endeavouring to find out how her mourning robe became her, than in the dismal ceremony for which they were preparing. Neither was this propensity (if we must needs confess the truth) at all diminished by the appearance of two strange knights, which occasioned some looking up, peeping, and whispering. Rowena alone, too proud to be vain, paid her greeting to her deliverer with a graceful courtesy. Her demeanour was serious, but not dejected; and it may be doubted whether thoughts of Ivanhoe, and of the uncertainty of his fate, did not claim as great a share in her gravity as the death of her kinsman.

To Cedric, however, who, as we have observed, was not remarkably clear-sighted on such occasions, the sorrow of his ward seemed so much deeper than any of the other maidens, that he deemed it proper to whisper the explanation— "She was the affianced bride of the noble Athelstane."—It may be doubted whether this communication went a far way to increase Wilfrid's

disposition to sympathise with the mourners of Conningsburgh.

Having thus formally introduced the guests to the different chambers in which the obsequies of Athelstane were celebrated under different forms, Cedric conducted them into a small room, destined, as he informed them, for the exclusive accommodation of honourable guests, whose more slight connection with the deceased might render them unwilling to join those who were immediately affected by the unhappy event. He assured them of every accommodation, and was about to withdraw when the Black Knight took his hand.

"I crave to remind you, noble Thane," he said, "that when we last parted, you promised, for the service I had the fortune to render you, to grant me a boon."

"It is granted ere named, noble Knight," said Cedric; "yet, at this sad moment"——

"Of that also," said the King, "I have bethought me—but my time is brief—neither does it seem to me unfit, that, when closing the grave

on the noble Athelstane, we should deposit therein certain prejudices and hasty opinions."

"Sir Knight of the Fetterlock," said Cedric, colouring and interrupting the King in his turn, "I trust your boon regards yourself and no other; for in that which concerns the honour of my house, it is scarce fitting that a stranger should mingle."

"Nor do I wish to mingle," said the King, mildly, "unless in so far as you will admit me to have an interest. As yet you have known me but as the Black Knight of the Fetterlock—Know me now as Richard Plantagenet!"

"Richard of Anjou!" exclaimed Cedric, stepping backward with the utmost astonishment.

"No, noble Cedric—Richard of England!—whose dearest interest—whose deepest wish, is to see her sons united with each other.—And, how now, worthy Thane! hast thou no knee for thy prince?"

"To Norman blood," said Cedric, "it hath never bended."

"Reserve thine homage then," said the Mo-

narch, "until I shall prove my right to it by my protection of Normans and English."

"Prince," answered Cedric, "I have ever done justice to thy bravery and thy worth—Nor am I ignorant of thy claim to the crown through thy descent from Matilda, niece to Edgar Atheling, and daughter to Malcolm of Scotland. But Matilda, though of the royal Saxon blood, was not the heir to the monarchy."

"I will not dispute my title with thee, noble Thane; but I will bid thee look around thee, and see where thou wilt find another to be put into the scale against it."

"And hast thou wandered hither, Prince, to tell me so?" said Cedric—"To upbraid me with the ruin of my race, ere the grave closed o'er the last scion of Saxon Royalty?"—His countenance darkened as he spoke.—"It was boldly—it was rashly done!"

"Not so, by the holy-rood!" replied the King; "it was done in the frank confidence which one brave man may repose in another, without a shadow of danger."

"Thou sayest well, Sir King—for King I own thou art, and wilt be, despite of my feeble opposition.—I dare not take the only mode to prevent it, though thou hast placed the strong temptation within my reach!"

"And now to my boon," said the King, "which I ask not with one jot the less confidence, that thou hast refused to acknowledge my lawful sovereignty. I require of thee, as a man of thy word, on pain of being held faithless, man-sworn, and *nidering*,* to forgive and receive to thy paternal affection the good knight, Wilfrid of Ivanhoe. In this reconciliation thou wilt own I have an interest—the happiness of my friend, and the quelling of dissention among my faithful people."

"And this is Wilfrid," said Cedric, pointing to his son.

"My father!—my father!" said Ivanhoe, prostrating himself at Cedric's feet, "grant me thy forgiveness!"

* Infamous.

"Thou hast it, my son," said Cedric, raising him up. "The son of Hereward knows how to keep his word, even when it has been passed to a Norman. But let me see thee use the dress and costume of thy English ancestry—no short cloaks, no gay bonnets, no fantastic plumage in my decent household. He that would be the son of Cedric must shew himself of English ancestry. —Thou art about to speak," he added, sternly, "and I guess the topic. The Lady Rowena must complete two years mourning, as for a betrothed husband—all our Saxon ancestors would disown us were we to treat of a new union for her ere the grave of him she should have wedded—him, so much the most worthy of her hand by birth and ancestry—is yet closed. The ghost of Athelstane himself would burst his bloody cerements, and stand before us to forbid such dishonour to his memory."

It seemed as if Cedric's words had raised a spectre; for, scarce had he uttered them ere the door flew open, and Athelstane, arrayed in the garments of the grave, stood before them, pale,

hagard, and like something arisen from the dead!

The effect of this apparition on the persons present was utterly appalling. Cedric started back as far as the wall of the apartment would permit, and, leaning against it as one unable to support himself, gazed on the figure of his friend with eyes that seemed fixed, and a mouth which he appeared incapable of shutting. Ivanhoe crossed himself, repeating prayers in Saxon, Latin, or Norman-French, as they occurred to his memory, while Richard alternately said, *Benedicite*, and swore, *Mort de ma vie!*

In the meantime, a horrible noise was heard below stairs, some crying, "Secure the treacherous monks!"—others, "Down with them into the dungeon!"—others, "Pitch them from the highest battlements!"

"In the name of God!" said Cedric, addressing what seemed the spectre of his departed friend, "if thou art mortal, speak!—if a departed spirit, say for what cause thou dost revisit us, or if I can do aught that can set thy spirit

at repose.—Living or dead, noble Athelstane, speak to Cedric!"

"I will," said the spectre, very composedly, "when I have collected breath, and when you give me time—Alive, saidst thou?—I am as much alive as he can be who has fed on bread and water for three days, which seem three ages—Yes, bread and water, Father Cedric! By heaven, and all saints in it, better food hath not passed my weasand for three livelong days, and by God's providence it is that I am now here to tell it."

"Why, noble Athelstane," said the Black Knight, "I myself saw you struck down by the fierce Templar, toward the end of the storm at Torquilstone, and as I thought, and Wamba reported, your skull was cloven through the teeth."

"You thought amiss, Sir Knight," said Athelstane, "and Wamba lied. My teeth are in good order, and that my supper shall presently find—No thanks to the Templar though, whose sword turned in his hand, so that the blade struck me flatlings—had my steel-cap being on I had not va-

lued it a rush, and had dealt him such a counter-buff as would have spoilt his retreat. But as it was, down I went, stunned, indeed, but unwounded. Others, of both sides, were beaten down and slaughtered above me, so that I never recovered my senses until I found myself in a coffin—(an open one by good luck)—placed before the altar of the church of Saint Edmund's. I sneezed repeatedly—groaned—awakened, and would have arisen, when the Sacristan and Abbot, full of terror, came running at the noise, surprised, doubtless, and no way pleased to find the man alive, whose heirs they had proposed themselves to be. I asked for wine—they gave me some, but it must have been highly medicated, for I slept yet more deeply than before, and wakened not for many hours. I found my arms swathed down—my feet tied so fast that mine ankles ache at the very remembrance—the place was utterly dark—the oubliette, as I suppose, of their accursed convent, and from the close, stifled, damp smell, I conceive it is also used for a place of sepulture. I had strange thoughts of what had befallen me,

when the door of my dungeon creaked, and two villain monks entered. They would have persuaded me I was in purgatory, but I knew too well the pursy short-breathed voice of the Father Abbot.—Saint Jeremy! how different from that tone with which he used to ask me for another slice of the haunch!—the dog has feasted with me from Christmas to Twelfth-night."

"Have patience, noble Athelstane," said the King, "take breath—tell your story at leisure—beshrew me but such a tale is as well worth listening to as a romance."

"Ay but, by the rood of Bromeholm, there was no romance in the matter!—a barley loaf and a pitcher of water—that *they* gave me, the niggardly traitors, whom my father and I myself had enriched, when their best resources were the flitches of bacon and measures of corn, out of which they wheedled poor serfs and bondsmen, in exchange for their prayers—the nest of foul ungrateful vipers—barley bread and ditch water to such a patron as I had been! I will smoke them out of their nest, though I be excommunicated."

"But in the name of Our Lady, noble Athelstane," said Cedric, grasping the hand of his friend, "how didst thou escape this imminent danger?—did their hearts relent?"

"Did their hearts relent!" echoed Athelstane. —"Do rocks melt with the sun? I should have been there still, had not some stir in the Convent, which I find was their procession hitherward to eat my funeral feast, when they well knew how and where I had been buried alive, summoned the swarm out of their hive. I heard them droning out their death-psalms, little judging they were sung in respect for my soul by those who were thus famishing my body. They went, however, and I waited long for food—no wonder—the gouty Sacristan was even too busy with his own provender to mind mine. At length down he came, with an unstable step and a strong flavour of wine and spices about his person. Good cheer had opened his heart, for he left me a nook of pasty and a flask of wine, instead of my former fare. I eat, drank, and was invigorated; when, to add to my good luck, the Sacristan, too totty to discharge his duty of turn-

key fitly, locked the door beside the staple, so that it fell ajar. The light, the food, the wine, set my invention to work. The staple to which my chains were fixed, was more rusted than I or the villain Abbot had supposed. Even iron could not stand without consuming in the damps of that infernal dungeon."

"Take breath, noble Athelstane," said Richard, "and partake of some refreshment, ere you proceed with a tale so dreadful."

"Partake!" quoth Athelstane; "I have been partaking five times to-day—and yet a morsel of that savoury ham were not altogether foreign to the matter; and I pray you, fair sir, to do me reason in a cup of wine."

The guests, though still agape with astonishment, pledged their resuscitated landlord, who thus proceeded in his story:—He had indeed now many more auditors than those to whom it was commenced, for Edith having given certain necessary orders for arranging matters within the Castle, had followed the dead-alive up to the stranger's apartment, attended by as many of the

guests, male and female, as could squeeze into the small room, while others, crowding the staircase, caught up an erroneous edition of the story, and transmitted it still more inaccurately to those beneath, who again sent it forth to the vulgar without, in a fashion totally irreconcilable to the real fact. Athelstane, however, went on as follows, with the history of his escape.—

"Finding myself freed from the staple, I dragged myself up stairs as well as a man loaded with shackles, and emaciated with fasting, might; and after much groping about, I was at length directed, by the sound of a jolly roundelay, to the apartment where the worthy Sacristan, an it so please ye, was holding a devil's mass with a huge beetle-browed broad-shouldered brother of the grey frock and cowl, who looked much more like a thief than a clergyman. I burst in upon them, and the fashion of my grave-clothes, as well as the clanking of my chains, made me more resemble an inhabitant of the other world than of this. Both stood aghast; but when I knocked down the Sacristan with my fist, the

other fellow, his pot-companion, fetched a blow at me with a huge quarter-staff."

"This must be our Friar Tuck, for a count's ransom," said Richard, looking at Ivanhoe.

"He may be the devil, an he will," said Athelstane. "Fortunately he missed his aim; and on my approaching to grapple with him, took to heels and ran for it. I failed not to set my own heels at liberty by means of the fetter-key which hung amongst others at the sexton's belt; and I had thoughts of beating out the knave's brains with the bunch of keys, but the thoughts of the nook of pasty and the flask of wine which the rascal had imparted to my captivity, came over my heart; so, with a brace of hearty kicks, I left him on the floor, pouched some baked meat, and a leathern bottle of wine, with which the two venerable brethren had been regaling, went to the stable, and found in a private stall mine own best palfrey, which, doubtless, had been set apart for the holy father Abbot's particular use. Hither I came with all the speed the beast could compass—man and mother's son flying before me

wherever I came, taking me for a spectre, the more especially as, to prevent my being recognized, I drew the corpse-hood over my face. I had not gained admittance into my own castle, had I not been supposed to be the attendant of a juggler who is making the people in the castle-yard very merry, considering they are assembled to celebrate their lord's funeral. I say the sewer thought I was dressed to bear a part in the tregetour's mummery, and so I got admission, and did but disclose myself to my mother, and eat a hasty morsel, ere I came in quest of you, my noble friend."

"And you have found me," said Cedric, "ready to resume our brave projects of honour and liberty. I tell thee, never will dawn a morrow so auspicious as the next, for the deliverance of the noble Saxon race."

"Talk not to me of delivering any one," said Athelstane; "it is well I am delivered myself. I am more intent on punishing that villain Abbot. He shall hang on the top of this Castle of Conningsburgh, in his cope and stole; and if the

stairs be too strait to admit his fat carcase, I will have him craned up from without."

"But, my son," said Edith, "consider his sacred office."

"Consider my three days fast," replied Athelstane; "I will have their blood every man of them. Front-de-Bœuf was burnt alive for a less matter, for he kept a good table for his prisoners, only put too much garlic in his last dish of pottage. But these hypocritical, ungrateful slaves, so often the self-invited flatterers at my board, who gave me neither pottage nor garlic, more or less, they die, by the soul of Hengist!"

"But the Pope, my noble friend," said Cedric——

"But the devil, my noble friend,"—answered Athelstane; "they die, and no more of them. Were they the best monks upon earth, the world would go on without them."

"For shame, noble Athelstane," said Cedric; "forget such wretches in the career of glory which lies open before thee. Tell this Norman prince, Richard of Anjou, that, lion-hearted as he is, he shall not hold undisputed the throne of

Alfred, while a male descendant of the Holy Confessor lives to dispute it."

"How!" said Athelstane, "is this the noble King Richard?"

"It is Richard Plantagenet himself," said Cedric; "yet I need not remind thee that, coming hither a guest of free-will, he may neither be injured nor detained prisoner—thou well knowest thy duty to him as his host."

"Ay, by my faith!" said Athelstane; "and my duty as a subject besides, for here I tender him my allegiance, heart and hand."

"My son," said Edith, "think on thy royal rights."

"Think on the freedom of England, degenerate Prince!" said Cedric.

"Mother and friend," said Athelstane, "a truce to your upbraidings—bread and water and a dungeon are marvellous mortifiers of ambition, and I rise from the tomb a wiser man than I descended into it. One half of those vain follies were puffed into mine ear by that perfidious Abbot Wolfram, and you may now judge if he is a counsellor to be trusted. Since these plots were set in

agitation, I have had nothing but hurried journies, indigestions, blows and bruises, imprisonment and starvation; besides that they can only end in the murder of some thousands of quiet folks. I tell you, I will be king on my own domains, and no where else; and my first act of dominion shall be to hang the Abbot."

"And my ward Rowena," said Cedric—"I trust you intend not to desert her?"

"Father Cedric," said Athelstane, "be reasonable. The Lady Rowena cares not for me—she loves the little finger of my kinsman Wilfrid's glove better than my whole person. There she stands to avouch it—Nay, blush not, kinswoman, there is no shame in loving a courtly knight better than a country franklin—and do not laugh neither, Rowena, for grave-clothes and a thin visage are, God knows, no matter of merriment—Nay, an thou wilt needs laugh, I will find thee a better jest—Give me thy hand, or rather lend it me, for I but ask it in the way of friendship.—Here, cousin Wilfrid of Ivanhoe, in thy favour I renounce and abjure——Hey! by Saint

Dunstan, our cousin Wilfrid hath vanished!—Yet, unless my eyes are still dazzled with the fasting I have undergone, I saw him stand there but even now."

All now looked around and enquired for Ivanhoe, but he had vanished. It was at length discovered that a Jew had enquired for him; and that, after very brief conference, he had called for Gurth and his armour, and had left the castle.

"Fair cousin," said Athelstane to Rowena, "could I think that this sudden disappearance of Ivanhoe was occasioned by other than the weightiest reasons, I would myself resume"——

But he had no sooner let go her hand, on first observing that Ivanhoe had disappeared, than Rowena, who had found her situation extremely embarrassing, had taken the first opportunity to escape from the apartment.

"Certainly," quoth Athelstane, "women are the least to be trusted of all animals, monks and abbots excepted. I am an infidel, if I expected not thanks from her, and perhaps a kiss to boot

—These cursed grave-clothes have surely a spell on them, every one flies from me. To you I turn, noble King Richard, with the vows of allegiance, which, as a liege-subject"——

But King Richard was gone also, and no one knew whither. At length it was learned that he had hastened to the court-yard, summoned to his presence the Jew who had spoken with Ivanhoe, and after a moment's speech with him, had called vehemently to horse, thrown himself upon a steed, compelled the Jew to mount another, and set off at a rate, which, according to Wamba, rendered the old Jew's neck not worth a penny's purchase.

"By my halidome!" said Athelstane, "it is certain that Zernebock hath possessed himself of my castle in my absence. I return in my grave-clothes, a pledge restored from the very sepulchre, and every one I speak to vanishes so soon as they hear my voice!—But it skills not talking of it. Come, my friends—such of you as are left, follow me to the banquet-hall, lest any more of us disappear—it is, I trust, as yet toler-

ably furnished, as becomes the obsequies of an ancient Saxon noble ; and should we tarry any longer, who knows but the devil may fly off with the supper ?"

CHAPTER XIII.

Be Mowbray's sins so heavy in his bosom,
That they may break his foaming courser's back,
And throw the rider headlong in the lists,
A caitiff recreant.———

Richard II.

Our scene now returns to the exterior of the Castle, or Preceptory of Templestowe, about the hour when the bloody die was to be cast for the life or death of Rebecca. It was a scene of bustle and life, as if the whole vicinity had poured forth its inhabitants to a village wake, or rural feast. But the earnest desire to look on blood and death, is not peculiar to these dark ages; though in the gladiatorial exercise of single combat and general tourney, they were habituated to

the bloody spectacle of brave men falling by each other's hands. Even in our own days, when morals are better understood, an execution, a bruising match, a riot, or a meeting of radical reformers, collects at considerable hazard to themselves immense crowds of spectators, otherwise little interested, excepting to see how matters are to be conducted, or whether the heroes of the day are, in the heroic language of insurgent tailors, flints or dunghills.

The eyes, therefore, of a very considerable multitude were bent on the gate of the Preceptory of Templestowe, with the purpose of witnessing the procession; while still greater numbers had already surrounded the tilt-yard belonging to that establishment. This inclosure was formed on a piece of ground adjoining to the Preceptory, which had been levelled with care, for the exercise of military and chivalrous sports. It occupied the brow of a soft and gentle eminence, was carefully palisaded around, and, as the Templars willingly invited spectators to be witnesses of their skill in feats of chivalry,

was amply supplied with galleries and benches for the use of spectators.

Upon the present occasion, a throne was erected at the eastern end for the Grand Master, surrounded with seats of distinction for the Preceptors and Knights of the Order. Over these floated the sacred standard, called *Le Beau-seant*, which was the ensign, as its name was the battle-cry, of the Templars.

At the opposite end of the lists was a pile of faggots, so arranged around a stake, deeply fixed in the ground, as to leave a space for the victim whom they were destined to consume, to enter within the fatal circle, in order to be chained to the stake by the fetters which hung ready for that purpose. Beside this deadly apparatus stood four black slaves, whose colour and African features, then so little known in England, appalled the multitude, who gazed on them as on demons employed about their own diabolical exercises. These men stirred not, excepting now and then, under the direction of one who seemed their chief, to shift and replace the ready fuel.

They looked not on the multitude. In fact, they seemed insensible of their presence, and of every thing save the discharge of their own horrible duty. And when, in speech with each other, they expanded their blubber lips, and shewed their white fangs, as if they grinned at the thoughts of the expected tragedy, the startled commons could scarcely help believing that they were actually the familiar spirits with whom the witch had communed, and who, her time being out, stood ready to assist in her dreadful punishment. They whispered with each other, and communicated all the feats which Satan had performed during that busy and unhappy period, not failing, of course, to give the devil rather more than his due.

"Have you not heard, Father Dennet," quoth one boor to another advanced in years, "that the devil has carried away bodily the great Saxon Thane, Athelstane of Conningsburgh?"

"Ay, but he brought him back though, by the blessing of God and Saint Dunstan."

"How's that?" said a brisk young fellow, dressed in a green cassock, embroidered with

gold, and having at his heels a stout lad bearing a harp upon his back, which betrayed his vocation. The Minstrel seemed of no vulgar rank; for, besides the splendour of his gayly broidered doublet, he wore around his neck a silver chain, by which hung the *wrest*, or key with which he tuned his harp. On his right arm was a silver plate, which, instead of bearing, as usual, the cognizance or badge of the baron to whose family he belonged, had barely the word SHERWOOD engraved upon it.—"How mean you by that?" said the gay Minstrel, mingling in the conversation of the peasants; "I came to seek one subject for my rhyme, and, by'r Lady, I were glad to find two."

"It is well avouched," said the elder peasant, "that after Athelstane of Conningsburgh had been dead four weeks"——

"That is impossible," said the Minstrel; "I saw him in life at the Passage of Arms at Ashby de la Zouch."

"Dead, however, he was, or else translated," said the younger peasant; "for I heard the

Monks of Saint Edmund's singing the death's hymn for him; and, moreover, there was a rich death-meal and dole at the Castle of Coningsburgh, as right was, and thither had I gone but for Mabel Parkins, who"——

"Ay, dead was Athelstane," said the old man, shaking his head, "and the more pity it was, for the old Saxon blood"——

"But, your story, my masters—your story," said the Minstrel, somewhat impatiently.

"Ay, ay—construe us the story," said a burley Friar, who stood beside them, leaning on a pole that hovered in appearance between a pilgrim's staff and a quarter-staff, and probably acted as either when occasion served,—"Your story," said the stalwart churchman; "burn not day-light about it—we have short time to spare."

"An please your reverence," said Dennet, "a drunken priest came to visit the Sacristan at Saint Edmunds"——

"It does not please my reverence," answered the churchman, "that there should be such an animal as a drunken priest, or, if there were, that

a layman should so speak him. Be mannerly, my friend, and conclude the holy man only rapt in meditation, which makes the head dizzy and foot unsteady, as if the stomach were filled with new wine—I have felt it myself."

"Well then," answered Father Dennet, "a holy brother came to visit the Sacristan at Saint Edmund's—a sort of a hedge-priest is the visitor, and kills half the deer that are stolen in the forest, who loves the tinkling of a pint-pot better than the sacring-bell, and deems a flitch of bacon worth ten of his breviary; for the rest, a good fellow and a merry, who will flourish a quarter-staff, draw a bow, and dance a Cheshire round with e'er a man in Yorkshire."

"That last part of thy speech, Dennet," said the Minstrel, "has saved thee a rib or twain."

"Tush, man, I fear him not," said Dennet; "I am somewhat old and stiff, but when I fought for the bell and ram at Doncaster"——

"But the story—the story, my friend," again said the Minstrel.

"Why, the tale is but this—Athelstane of Conningsburgh was buried at Saint Edmund's."

"That's a lie, and a loud one," said the Friar, "for I saw him borne to his own Castle of Coningsburgh."

"Nay then, e'en tell the story yourself, my masters," said Dennet, turning sulky at these repeated contradictions; and it was with some difficulty that the boor could be prevailed, by the request of his comrade and the Minstrel, to renew his tale.—"These two *sober* friars," said he at length, "since this reverend man will needs have them such, had continued drinking good ale, and wine, and what not, for the best part of a summer's day, when they were aroused by a deep groan, and a clanking of chains, and the figure of the deceased Athelstane entered the apartment, saying, 'Ye evil shepherds'"——

"It is false," said the Friar hastily, "he never spoke a word."

"So ho! Friar Tuck," said the Minstrel, drawing him apart from the rustics; "we have started a new hare, I find."

"I tell thee, Allan-a-Dale," said the Hermit, "I saw Athelstane of Conningsburgh as much as bodily eyes ever saw a living man. He had

his shroud on, and all about him smelt of the sepulchre—A butt of sack will not wash it out of my memory."

"Pshaw!" answered the Minstrel; "thou dost but jest with me?"

"Never believe me," said the Friar, "an I fetched not a knock at him with my quarter-staff that would have felled an ox, and it glided through his body as it might through a pillar of smoke!"

"By Saint Hubert," said the Minstrel, "but it is a wonderous tale, and fit to be put in metre to the ancient tune, 'Sorrow came to the old Friar.'"

"Laugh, if ye list," said Friar Tuck; "but an ye catch me singing on such a theme, may the next ghost or devil carry me off with him head-long! No, no—I instantly formed the purpose of assisting at some good work, such as the burning of a witch, a judicial combat, or the like matter of godly service."

As they thus conversed, the heavy bell of the church of Saint Michael of Templestowe, a ve-

nerable building, situated in a hamlet at some distance from the Preceptory, broke short their argument. One by one the sullen sounds fell successively on the ear, leaving but sufficient space for each to die away in distant echo, ere the air was again filled by repetition of the iron knell. These sounds, the signal of the approaching ceremony, chilled with awe the hearts of the assembled multitude, whose eyes were now turned to the Preceptory, expecting the approach of the Grand Master, the champion, and the criminal.

At length the draw-bridge fell, the gates opened, and a knight, bearing the great standard of the Order, sallied from the castle, preceded by six trumpets, and followed by the Knights Preceptors, two and two, the Grand Master coming last, mounted on a stately horse, whose furniture was of the simplest kind. Behind him came Brian de Bois-Guilbert, armed cap-a-pee in bright armour, but without his lance, shield, or sword, which were borne by his two esquires behind him. His face, though partly hidden by a long plume which floated down from his barret-

cap, bore a strong and mingled expression of passion, in which pride seemed to contend with irresolution. He looked ghastly pale, as if he had not slept for several nights, yet reined his pawing war-horse with the habitual ease and grace proper to the best lance of the Order of the Temple. His general appearance was grand and commanding; but, looking at him with attention, men read that in his dark features, from which we willingly withdraw our eyes.

On either side rode Conrade of Mont-Fitchet, and Albert de Malvoisin, who acted as godfathers to the champion. They were in their robes of peace, the white dress of the Order. Behind them followed other Knights Companions of the Temple, with a long train of esquires and pages, clad in black, aspirants to the honour of being one day Knights of the Order. After these neophites came a guard of warders on foot, in the same sable livery, amidst whose partizans might be seen the pale form of the accused, moving with a slow but undismayed step towards the scene of her fate. She was stript of all her ornaments,

lest perchance there should be among them some of those amulets which Satan was supposed to bestow upon his victims, to deprive them of the power of confession even when under the torture. A coarse white dress, of the simplest form, had been substituted for her oriental garments; yet there was such an exquisite mixture of courage and resignation in her look, that even in this garb, and with no other ornament than her long black tresses, each eye wept that looked upon her, and the most hardened bigot regretted the fate that had converted a creature so goodly into a vessel of wrath, and a waged slave of the devil.

A crowd of inferior personages belonging to the Preceptory followed the victim, all moving with the utmost order, with arms folded and looks bent upon the ground.

This slow procession moved up the gentle eminence, on the summit of which was the tilt-yard, and, entering the lists, marched once around them from right to left, and when they had completed the circle, made a halt. There was then a momentary bustle, while the Grand Master and

all his attendants, excepting the champion and his godfathers, dismounted from their horses, which were immediately removed out of the lists by the esquires, who were in attendance for that purpose.

The unfortunate Rebecca was conducted to the black chair placed near the pile. On her first glance at the terrible spot where preparations were making for a death alike dismaying to the mind and painful to the body, she was observed to shudder and shut her eyes, praying internally doubtless, for her lips moved though no speech was heard. In the space of a minute she opened her eyes, looked fixedly on the pile as if to familiarize her mind with the object, and then slowly and naturally turned away her head.

Meanwhile, the Grand Master had assumed his seat; and when the chivalry of his order was placed around and behind him, each in his due rank, a loud and long flourish of the trumpets announced that the Court were seated for judgment. Malvoisin, then, acting as godfather of the Champion, stepped forward, and laid the glove of the Jewess, which was the pledge of battle, at the feet of the Grand Master.

"Valorous Lord, and reverend Father," said he, "here standeth the good Knight, Brian de Bois-Guilbert, Knight Preceptor of the Order of the Temple, who, by accepting the pledge of battle which I now lay at your reverence's feet, hath become bound to do his devoir in combat this day, to maintain that this Jewish maiden, by name Rebecca, hath justly deserved the doom passed upon her in a Chapter of this most Holy Order of the Temple of Zion, condemning her to die as a sorceress;—here, I say, he standeth such battle to do, knightly and honourably, if such be your noble and sanctified pleasure."

"Hath he made oath," said the Grand Master, "that his quarrel is just and honourable? Bring forward the Crucifix and the *Te igitur*."

"Sir, and most reverend Father," answered Malvoisin, readily, "our brother here present hath already sworn to the truth of his accusation in the hand of the good Knight Conrade de Mont-Fitchet; and otherwise he ought not to be sworn, seeing that his adversary is an unbeliever, and may take no oath."

This explanation was satisfactory, to Albert's

great joy; for the wily knight had foreseen the great difficulty, or rather impossibility, of prevailing upon Brian de Bois-Guilbert to take such an oath before the assembly, and had invented this excuse to escape the necessity of his doing so.

The Grand Master, having allowed the apology of Albert Malvoisin, commanded the herald to stand forth and do his devoir. The trumpets then again flourished, and a herald, stepping forward, proclaimed aloud,—"Oyez, oyez, oyez.—Here standeth the good Knight, Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert, ready to do battle with any knight of free blood, who will sustain the quarrel allowed and allotted to the Jewess Rebecca, to try by champion, in respect of lawful essoyne of her own body; and to such champion the reverend and valorous Grand Master here present allows a fair field, and equal partition of sun and wind, and whatever else appertains to a fair combat." The trumpets again sounded, and there was a dead pause of many minutes.

"No champion appears for the appellant," said the Grand Master. "Go, herald, and ask her whether she expects any one to do battle for

her in this her cause." The herald went to the chair in which Rebecca was seated, and Bois-Guilbert suddenly turning his horse's head toward that end of the lists, in spite of hints on either side from Malvoisin and Mont-Fitchet, was by the side of Rebecca's chair as soon as the herald.

"Is this regular, and according to the law of combat?" said Malvoisin, looking to the Grand Master.

"Albert de Malvoisin, it is," answered Beaumanoir; "for in this appeal to the judgment of God, we may not prohibit parties from having that communication with each other, which may best tend to bring forth the truth of the quarrel."

In the mean time, the herald spoke to Rebecca in these terms:—"Damsel, the Honourable and Reverend the Grand Master demands of thee, if thou art prepared with a champion to do battle this day in thy behalf, or if thou doest yield thee as one justly condemned to a deserved doom?"

"Say to the Grand Master," replied Rebecca, "that I maintain my innocence, and do not

yield me as justly condemned, lest I become guilty of mine own blood. Say to him, that I challenge such delay as his forms will permit, to see if God, whose opportunity is in man's extremity, will raise me up a deliverer; and when such uttermost space is passed, may His holy will be done!" The herald retired to carry this answer to the Grand Master.

"God forbid," said Lucas Beaumanoir, "that Jew or Pagan should impeach us of injustice.—Until the shadows be cast from the west to the eastward, will we wait to see if a champion will appear for this unfortunate woman. When the day is so far passed, let her prepare for death."

The herald communicated the words of the Grand Master to Rebecca, who bowed her head submissively, folded her arms, and, looking up towards heaven, seemed to expect that aid from above which she could scarce promise herself from man. During this awful pause, the voice of Bois-Guilbert broke on her ear—it was but a whisper, yet it startled her more than the summons of the herald had appeared to do.

"Rebecca," said the Templar, "doest thou hear me?"

"I have no portion in thee, cruel, hard-hearted man," said the unfortunate maiden.

"Ay, but doest thou understand my words?" said the Templar; "for the sound of my voice is frightful in mine own ears. I scarce know on what ground we stand, or for what purpose they have brought us hither.—This listed space—that chair—these faggots—I know their purpose, and yet it appears to me like something unreal—the fearful picture of a vision, which appals my sense with hideous fantasies, which convince not my reason."

"My mind and senses keep touch and time," answered Rebecca, "and tell me alike that these faggots are destined to consume my earthly body, and open a painful but a brief passage to a better world."

"Dreams, Rebecca—dreams," answered the Templar; "idle visions, rejected by the wisdom of your own wiser Sadducees. Hear me, Rebecca," he said, proceeding with animation; "a

better chance hast thou for life and liberty than yonder knaves and dotard dream of. Mount thee behind me on my steed—on Zamor, the gallant horse that never failed his rider. I won him in single fight from the Soldan of Trebizond—mount, I say, behind me—in one short hour is pursuit and inquiry far behind—a new world of pleasure opens to thee—to me a new career of fame. Let them speak the doom which I despise, and erase the name of Bois-Guilbert from their list of monastic slaves! I will wash out with blood whatever blot they may dare to cast on my scutcheon."

"Tempter," said Rebecca, "begone!—Not in this last extremity canst thou move me one hair's-breadth from my resting place—surrounded as I am by foes, I hold thee as my worst and most deadly—avoid thee, in the name of God!"

Albert Malvoisin, alarmed and impatient at the duration of their conference, now advanced to interrupt it.

"Hath the maiden acknowledged her guilt?" he

demanded of Bois-Guilbert; "or is she resolute in her denial?"

"She is indeed *resolute*," said Bois-Guilbert.

"Then," said Malvoisin, "must thou, noble brother, resume thy place to attend the issue—The shades are changing on the circle of the dial—Come, brave Bois-Guilbert—come, thou hope of our holy Order, and soon to be its head."

As he spoke in this soothing tone, he laid his hand on the knight's bridle, as if to lead him back to his station.

"False villain! what meanest thou by thy hand on my rein?" said Sir Brian, angrily. And shaking off his companion's grasp, he rode back to the upper end of the lists.

"There is yet spirit in him," said Malvoisin apart to Mont-Fitchet, "were it well directed—but, like the Greek fire, it burns whatever approaches it."

The Judges had now been two hours in the lists, awaiting in vain the appearance of a champion.

"And reason good," said Friar Tuck, "see-

ing she is a Jewess—and yet, by mine Order, it is hard that so young and beautiful a creature should perish without one blow being struck in her behalf. Were she ten times a witch, providing she were but the least bit of a Christian, my quarter-staff should ring noon on the steel cap of yonder fierce Templar, ere he carried the matter off thus."

It was, however, the general belief, that no one could or would appear for a Jewess accused of sorcery, and the knights, instigated by Malvoisin, whispered to each other, that it was time to declare the pledge of Rebecca forfeited. At this instant a knight, urging his horse to speed, appeared on the plain advancing towards the lists. An hundred voices exclaimed, "A champion! a champion!" And despite the prepossession, and prejudices of the multitude, they shouted unanimously as the knight rode into the tilt-yard. The second glance, however, served to destroy the hope that his timely arrival had excited. His horse, urged for many miles to its utmost speed, appeared to reel from fatigue, and the ri-

der, however undauntedly he presented himself in the lists, either from weakness, weariness, or both, seemed scarce able to support himself in the saddle.

To the summons of the herald, who demanded his rank, his name, and purpose, the stranger knight answered readily and boldly, "I am a good knight and noble, come hither to sustain with lance and sword the just and lawful quarrel of this damsel, Rebecca, daughter of Isaac of York; to uphold the doom pronounced against her to be false and truthless, and to defy Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert, as a traitor, murtherer, and liar; as I will prove in this field with my body against his, by the aid of God, of Our Lady, and of Monseigneur Saint George, the good knight."

"The stranger must first show," said Malvoisin, "that he is good Knight, and of honourable lineage. The Temple sendeth not forth her champions against nameless men."

"My name," said the Knight, raising his helmet, "is better known, my lineage more pure

Malvoisin, than thine own. I am Wilfrid of Ivanhoe."

"I will not fight with thee," said the Templar, in a changed and hollow voice. "Get thy wounds healed, purvey thee a better horse, and it may be I will hold it worth my while to scourge out of thee this boyish spirit of bravade."

"Ha! proud Templar," said Ivanhoe, "hast thou forgotten that twice didst thou fall before this lance? Remember the lists at Acre—remember the Passage of Arms at Ashby—remember thy proud vaunt in the halls of Rotherwood, and the gage of your gold chain against my reliquary, that thou wouldst do battle with Wilfrid of Ivanhoe, and recover the honour thou hadst lost! By that reliquary, and the holy relique it contains, I will proclaim thee, Templar, a coward in every court in Europe—in every Preceptory of thine Order—unless thou do battle without farther delay."

Bois-Guilbert turned his countenance irresolutely towards Rebecca, and then exclaimed, looking fiercely at Ivanhoe, "Dog of a Saxon

take thy lance, and prepare for the death thou hast drawn upon thee !"

"Does the Grand Master allow me the combat ?" said Ivanhoe.

"I may not deny what you have challenged," said the Grand Master, "providing the maiden accepts thee as her champion. Yet I would thou wert in better plight to do battle. An enemy of our Order hast thou ever been, yet would I have thee honourably met with."

"Thus—thus as I am, and not otherwise," said Ivanhoe; "it is the judgment of God—to his keeping I commend myself.—Rebecca," said he, riding up to the fatal chair, "doest thou accept of me for thy champion ?"

"I do," she said—"I do," fluttered by an emotion which the fear of death had been unable to produce, "I do accept thee as the champion whom Heaven hath sent me. Yet, no—no—thy wounds are uncured—Meet not that proud man—why shouldst thou perish also ?"

But Ivanhoe was already at his post, and had closed his visor, and assumed his lance. Bois-

Guilbert did the same; and his esquire remarked, as he clasped his visor, that his face, which had, notwithstanding the variety of emotions by which he had been agitated, continued during the whole morning of an ashy paleness, was now become suddenly very much flushed.

The herald, then, seeing each champion in his place, uplifted his voice, repeating thrice—*Faites vos devoirs, preux chevaliers.* After the third cry, he withdrew to the side of the lists, and again proclaimed, that none, on peril of instant death, should dare by word, cry, or action, to interfere with or disturb this fair field of combat. The Grand Master, who held in his hand the gage of battle, Rebecca's glove, now threw it into the lists, and pronounced the fatal signal words, *Laissez aller.*

The trumpets sounded, and the knights charged each other in full career. The wearied horse of Ivanhoe, and its no less exhausted rider, went down, as all had expected, before the well aimed lance and vigorous steed of the Templar. This issue of the combat all had expected; but

although the spear of Ivanhoe did but, in comparison, touch the shield of Bois-Guilbert, that champion, to the astonishment of all who beheld it, reeled in his saddle, lost his stirrups, and fell in the lists.

Ivanhoe, extricating himself from his fallen horse, was soon on foot, hastening to mend his fortune with his sword; but his antagonist arose not. Wilfrid, placing his foot on his breast, and the sword's point to his throat, commanded him to yield him, or die on the spot. Bois-Guilbert returned no answer.

"Slay him not, Sir Knight," cried the Grand Master, "unshriven and unabsolved—kill not body and soul. We allow him vanquished."

He descended into the lists, and commanded them to unhelm the conquered champion. His eyes were closed—the dark red flush was still on his brow. As they looked on him in astonishment, the eyes opened—but they were fixed and glazed. The flush passed from his brow, and gave way to the pallid hue of death. Unscathed by the lance of his enemy, he had died a victim to the violence of his own contending passions.

"This is indeed the judgment of God," said the Grand Master, looking upwards—"*Fiat voluntas tua!*"

CHAPTER XIV.

So ! now 'tis ended, like an old wife's story.
WEBSTER.

WHEN the first moments of surprise were over, Wilfrid of Ivanhoe demanded of the Grand Master, as judge of the field, if he had manfully and rightfully done his duty in the combat ?

" Manfully and rightfully has it been done," said the Grand Master ; " I pronounce the maiden free and guiltless—The arms and the body of the deceased knight are at the will of the victor."

" I will not despoil him of his weapons," said the Knight of Ivanhoe, " nor condemn his corpse to shame—he hath fought for Christendom —God's arm, no human hand, hath this day struck him down. But let his obsequies be pri-

vate, as becomes those of a man who died in an unjust quarrel.—And for the maiden"——

He was interrupted by a clattering of horses' feet, advancing in such numbers, and so rapidly, as to shake the ground before them; and the Black Knight gallopped into the lists. He was followed by a numerous band of men-at-arms, and several knights in complete armour.

"I am too late," he said, looking around him. "I had doomed Bois-Guilbert for mine own property.—Ivanhoe, was this well, to take on thee such a venture, and thou scarce able to keep thy saddle?"

"Heaven, my Liege," answered Ivanhoe, "hath taken this proud man for its victim. He was not to be honoured in dying as your will had designed."

"Peace be with him," said Richard, looking stedfastly on the corpse, "if it may be so—he was a gallant knight, and has died in his steel harness full knightly. But we must waste no time—Bohun, do thine office!"

A Knight stepped forward from the King's at-

tendants, and laying his hand on the shoulder of Albert de Malvoisin, said, "I arrest thee of High Treason."

The Grand Master had hitherto stood astonished at the appearance of so many warriors.—He now spoke.

"Who dares to arrest a Knight of the Temple of Zion, within the girth of his own Preceptory, and in the presence of the Grand Master? and by whose authority is this bold outrage offered?"

"I make the arrest," replied the Knight—"I, Henry Bohun, Earl of Essex, Lord High Constable of England."

"And he arrests Malvoisin," said the King, raising his visor, "by the order of Richard Plantagenet, here present. Conrade Mont-Fitchet, it is well for thee thou art born no subject of mine.—But for thee, Malvoisin, thou diest with thy brother Philip, ere the world be a week older."

"I will resist thy doom," said the Grand Master.

"Proud Templar," said the King, "thou canst not—look up and behold the Royal Standard of England floats over thy towers instead of thy Temple banner!—Be wise, Beaumanoir, and make no bootless opposition—Thy hand is in the lion's mouth."

"I will appeal to Rome against thee," said the Grand Master, "for usurpation on the immunities and privileges of our Order."

"Be it so," said the King; "but for thine own sake tax me not with usurpation now.—Dissolve thy Chapter, and depart with thy followers to thy next Preceptory, (if thou canst find one) which has not been made the scene of treasonable conspiracy against the King of England—Or, if thou wilt remain, to share our hospitality, and behold our justice."

"To be a guest in the house where I should command?" said the Templar; "Never.—Chaplains, raise the Psalm, *Quare fremuerunt Gentes?*—Knights, squires, and followers of the Holy Temple, prepare to follow the banner of *Beau-seant!*"

The Grand Master spoke with a dignity which confronted even that of England's king himself, and inspired courage into his surprised and dismayed followers. They gathered around him like the sheep around the watch-dog, when they hear the baying of the wolf. But they evinced not the timidity of the scared flock—there were dark brows of defiance, and looks which menaced the hostility they dared not to proffer in words. They drew together in a dark line of spears, from which the white cloaks of the knights were visible among the dusky garments of their retainers, like the lighter-coloured edges of a sable cloud. The multitude, who had raised a clamorous shout of reprobation, paused and gazed in silence on the formidable and experienced body to which they had unwarily bade defiance, and shrunk back from their front.

The Earl of Essex, when he beheld them pause in their assembled force, dashed the rowels into his charger's sides, and galloped backwards and forwards to array his followers, in opposition to a band so formidable. Richard alone, as if he

loved the danger his presence had provoked, rode slowly along the front of the Templars, calling aloud, "What, sirs! Among so many gallant knights, will none dare splinter a spear with Richard?—Sirs of the Temple! your ladies are but sun-burned, if they are not worth the shiver of a broken lance."

"The Brethren of the Temple," said the Grand Master, riding forward in advance of their body, "fight not on such idle and profane quarrel—and not with thee, Richard of England, shall a Templar cross lance in my presence. The Pope and Princes of Europe shall judge our quarrel, and whether a Christian prince has done well in bucklering the cause which thou hast to-day adopted. If unassailed, we depart assailing no one. To thine honour we refer the armour and household goods of the Order which we leave behind us, and on thy conscience we lay the scandal and offence thou hast this day given to Christendom."

With these words, and without waiting a reply, the Grand Master gave the signal of departure.

Their trumpets sounded a wild march, of an oriental character, which formed the usual signal for the Templars to advance. They changed their array from a line to a column of march, and moved off as slowly as their horses could step, as if to shew it was only the will of their Grand Master, and no fear of the opposing force which compelled them to withdraw.

"By the splendour of Our Lady's brow!" said King Richard, "it is pity of their lives that these Templars are not so trusty as they are disciplined and valiant."

The multitude, like a timid cur which waits to bark till the object of its challenge has turned his back, raised a feeble shout as the rear of the squadron left the ground.

During the tumult which attended the retreat of the Templars, Rebecca saw and heard nothing—she was locked in the arms of her aged father, giddy, and almost senseless, with the rapid change of circumstances around her. But one word from Isaac at length recalled her scattered feelings.

"Let us go," he said, "my dear daughter, my recovered treasure—let us go to throw ourselves at the feet of the good youth."

"Not so," said Rebecca, "O no—no—no—I must not at this moment dare to speak to him—Alas! I should say more than——No, my father, let us instantly leave this evil place."

"But, my daughter," said Isaac, "to leave him who hath come forth like a strong man with his spear and shield, holding his life as nothing, so he might redeem thy captivity; and thou, too, the daughter of a people strange unto him and his—this is service to be thankfully acknowledged."

"It is—it is—most thankfully—most devoutly acknowledged—it shall be still more so—but not now—for the sake of thy beloved Rachel, father, grant my request—not now!"

"Nay, but," said Isaac, insisting, "they will deem us more thankless than mere dogs."

"But thou seest, my dear father, that King Richard is in presence, and that"——

"True, my best—my wisest Rebecca!—Let us hence—let us hence!—Money he will lack, for he has just returned from Palestine, and, as they say, from prison—and pretext for exacting it, should he need any, may arise out of my simple traffic with his brother John. Away, away—let us hence!"

And hurrying his daughter in his turn, he conducted her from the lists, and by means of conveyance which he had provided, transported her safely to the house of the Rabbi Nathan.

The Jewess, whose fortunes had formed the principal interest of the day, had not retired so much unobserved, but that the attention of the populace was transferred to the Black Knight. They now filled the air with "Long life to Richard with the Lion's Heart, and down with the usurping Templars!"

"Notwithstanding all this lip-loyalty," said Ivanhoe to the Earl of Essex, "it was well the King took the precaution to bring thee with him, noble Earl, and so many of thy trusty followers."

The Earl smiled, and shook his head.

"Gallant Ivanhoe, dost thou know our Master so well, and yet suspect him of taking so wise a precaution? I was drawing toward York, having heard that Prince John was making a head there, when I met King Richard, like a true knight-errant, gallopping hither to achieve this adventure of the Templar and the Jewess, with his own single arm. I accompanied him with my band almost maugre his consent."

"And what news from York, brave Earl?" said Ivanhoe; "will the rebels bide us there?"

"No more than December's snow will bide July's sun," said the Earl; "they are dispersing; and who should come posting to bring us the news, but John himself?"

"The traitor! the ungrateful insolent traitor!" said Ivanhoe; "Did not Richard order him into confinement?"

"O! he received him," said the Earl, "as if they had met after a hunting-party; and, pointing to me and our men-at-arms, said, Thou seest, brother, I have some angry men with me—thou wert best go to our mother, carry her my dute-

ous affection, and abide with her until men's minds are pacified."

"And this was all he said?" replied Ivanhoe; "would not any one say that this Prince invites to treason by his clemency?"

"Just," replied the Earl, "as the man may be said to invite death, who undertakes to fight a combat with a dangerous wound unhealed."

"I forgive thee the jest, Lord Earl," said Ivanhoe; "but, remember, I hazarded but my own life—Richard, the welfare of his kingdom."

"Those," replied Essex, "who are specially careless of their own welfare, are seldom remarkably attentive to that of others—But let us haste to the castle, for Richard meditates punishing some of the subordinate members of the conspiracy, though he has pardoned their principal."

From the judicial investigations which followed on this occasion, and which are given at length in the Wardour Manuscript, it appears that Maurice de Bracy escaped over seas, and

went into the service of Philip of France; while Philip de Malvoisin, and his brother Albert, the Preceptor of Templestowe, were executed, although Waldemar Fitzurse, the soul of the conspiracy, escaped with banishment; and though Prince John, for whose behoof it was undertaken, was not even censured by his good-natured brother. No one, however, pitied the fate of the two Malvoisins, who only suffered the death which they had both well deserved, by many acts of falsehood, cruelty, and oppression.

Briefly after the judicial combat, Cedric the Saxon was summoned to the court of Richard, which, for the purpose of quieting the counties that had been disturbed by the ambition of his brother, was then held at York. Cedric tushed and pshawed more than once at the message—but he refused it not. In fact, the return of Richard had quenched every hope that he had entertained of restoring a Saxon dynasty in England; for, whatever head the Saxons might have made in the event of a civil war, it was plain that nothing could be done under the undisputed do-

minion of Richard, popular as he was by his personal good qualities and military fame, although his administration was wilfully careless, now too indulgent, and now allied to despotism.

But, moreover, it could not escape even Cedric's reluctant observation, that his project for an absolute union among the Saxons, by the marriage of Rowena and Athelstane, was now completely at an end by the mutual dissent of both parties concerned. This was, indeed, an event which, in his ardour for the Saxon cause, he could not have anticipated, and even when the disinclination of both was broadly and plainly manifested, he could scarce bring himself to believe that two Saxons of royal descent should scruple, on personal grounds, at an alliance so necessary for the public weal of the nation. But it was not the less certain: Rowena had always expressed her repugnance to Athelstane, and now Athelstane was no less plain and positive in proclaiming his resolution, never to pursue his addresses to the Lady Rowena. Even the natural obstinacy of Cedric sunk beneath these obstacles,

where he, remaining on the point of junction, had the task of dragging a reluctant pair up to it, one with each hand. He made, however, a last vigorous attack on Athelstane, and he found that resuscitated sprout of Saxon royalty engaged, like country squires of our own day, in a furious war with the clergy.

It seems that, after all his deadly menaces against the Abbot of Saint Edmund's, Athelstane's spirit of revenge, what between the natural indolent kindness of his own disposition, what through the prayers of his mother Edith, attached, like most ladies, (of the period) to the clerical order, had terminated in his keeping the Abbot and his monks in the dungeons of Coningsburgh for three days on a meagre diet. For this atrocity the Abbot menaced him with excommunication, and made out a dreadful list of complaints in the bowels and stomach, suffered by himself and his monks, in consequence of the tyrannical and unjust imprisonment they had sustained. With this controversy, and with the means he had adopted to counteract this clerical

persecution, Cedric found the mind of his friend Athelstane so fully occupied, that it had no room for another idea. And when Rowena's name was mentioned, the noble Athelstane prayed leave to quaff a full goblet to her health, and that she might soon be the bride of his kinsman Wilfrid. It was a desperate case therefore. There was obviously no more to be made of Athelstane; or, as Wamba expressed it, in a phrase which has descended from Saxon times to ours, he was a cock that would not fight.

There remained betwixt Cedric and the determination which the lovers desired to come to, only two obstacles—his own obstinacy, and his dislike of the Norman dynasty. The former feelings gradually gave way before the endearments of his ward, and the pride which he could not help nourishing in the fame of his son. Besides, he was not insensible to the honour of allying his own line to that of Alfred, when the superior claims of the descendant of Edward the Confessor were abandoned for ever. Cedric's aversion to the Norman race of kings was also

much undermined,—first, by consideration of the impossibility of ridding England of the new dynasty, a feeling which goes far to create loyalty in the subject; and, secondly, by the personal attention of King Richard, who delighted in the blunt humour of Cedric, and, to use the language of the Wardour Manuscript, so dealt with the noble Saxon, that, ere he had been a guest at court for seven days, he had given his consent to the marriage of his ward Rowena and his son Wilfrid of Ivanhoe.

The nuptials of our hero, thus formally approved by his father, were celebrated in the most august of temples, the noble Minster of York. The King himself attended, and from the countenance which he afforded on this and other occasions to the distressed and hitherto degraded Saxons, gave them a safer and more certain prospect of attaining their just rights, than they could reasonably hope from the precarious chance of a civil war. The Church gave her full solemnities, graced with all the splendour which she of Rome knows how to apply with such brilliant effect.

Gurth, gallantly apparelled, attended as esquire upon his young master whom he had served so faithfully, and the magnanimous Wamba, decorated with a new cap and a most gorgeous set of silver bells. Sharers of Wilfrid's dangers and adversity, they remained, as they had a right to expect, the partakers of his more prosperous career.

But besides this domestic attendance, these distinguished nuptials were celebrated by the attendance of the high-born Normans, as well as Saxons, joined with the universal jubilee of the lower orders, that marked the marriage of two individuals as a pledge of the future peace and harmony betwixt two races, which, since that period, have been so completely mingled, that the distinction has become wholly invisible. Cedric lived to see this union approximate towards its completion; for as the two nations mixedin society and formed intermarriages with each other, the Normans abated their scorn, and the Saxons were refined from their rusticity. But it was not until the reign of Edward the Third that the mixed language, now termed English, was spoken at

the court of London, and that the hostile distinction of Norman and Saxon seems entirely to have disappeared.

It was upon the second morning after this happy bridal, that the Lady Rowena was made acquainted by her hand-maid Elgitha, that a damsel desired admission to her presence, and solicited that their parley might be without witness. Rowena wondered, hesitated, became curious, and ended by commanding the damsel to be admitted, and her attendants to withdraw.

She entered—a noble and commanding figure, the long white veil in which she was shrouded, overshadowing rather than concealing the elegance and majesty of her shape. Her demeanour was that of respect, unmingled by the least shade either of fear, or of a wish to propitiate favour. Rowena was ever ready to acknowledge the claims, and attend to the feelings of others. She arose, and would have conducted the lovely stranger to a seat, but she looked at Elgitha, and again intimated a wish to discourse with the Lady Rowena alone. Elgitha had no sooner retired with unwilling steps, than, to the surprise

of the Lady of Ivanhoe, her fair visitant kneeled on one knee, pressed her hands to her forehead, and bending her head to the ground, in spite of Rowena's resistance, kissed the embroidered hem of her tunic.

"What means this?" said the surprised bride; "or why do you offer to me a deference so unusual?"

"Because to you, Lady of Ivanhoe," said Rebecca, rising up and resuming the usual quiet dignity of her manner, "I may lawfully, and without rebuke, pay the debt of gratitude which I owe to Wilfrid of Ivanhoe. I am—forgive the boldness which has offered to you the homage of my country—I am the unhappy Jewess, for whom your husband hazarded his life against such fearful odds in the tilt-yard of Templestowe."

"Damsel," said Rowena, "Wilfrid of Ivanhoe on that day rendered back but in slight measure your unceasing charity towards him in his wounds and misfortunes. Speak, is there aught remains in which he and I can serve thee?"

"Nothing," said Rebecca, calmly, "unless you will transmit to him my grateful farewell."

"You leave England, then," said Rowena, scarce recovering the surprise of this extraordinary visit.

"I leave it, lady, ere this moon again changes. My father hath a brother high in favour with Mohammed Boabdil, King of Grenada—thither we go, secure of peace and protection, for the payment of such ransom as the Moslem exact from our people."

"And are you not then as well protected in England?" said Rebecca. "My husband has favour with the King—the King himself is just and generous."

"Lady," said Rebecca, "I doubt it not—but the people of England are a fierce race, quarreling ever with their neighbours or among themselves, and ready to plunge the sword into the bowels of each other. Such is no safe abode for the children of my people. Ephraim is an heartless dove—Issachar an over-laboured drudge, which stoops between two burthens. Not in a land of war and blood, surrounded by hostile neighbours, and distracted by internal factions, can Israel hope to rest during her wanderings."

"But you, maiden," said Rowena—"you surely can have nothing to fear. She who nursed the sick bed of Ivanhoe," she continued, rising with enthusiasm—"she can have nothing to fear in England, where Saxon and Norman will contend who shall most do her honour."

"Thy speech is fair, lady," said Rebecca, "and thy purpose fairer; but it may not be—there is a gulph betwixt us. Our breeding, our faith, alike forbid either to pass over it. Farewell—yet, e'er I go, indulge me one request. The bridal-veil hangs over thy face; raise it, and let me see the features of which fame speaks so highly."

"They are scarce worthy of being looked upon," said Rowena; "but, expecting the same from my visitant, I remove the veil."

She took it off accordingly, and partly from the consciousness of beauty, partly from bashfulness, she blushed so intensely, that cheek, brow, neck, and bosom, were suffused with crimson. Rebecca blushed also, but it was a momentary feeling; and, mastered by higher emotions, past slowly from her features like the crim-

son cloud, which changes colour when the sun sinks beneath the horizon.

"Lady," she said, "the countenance you have deigned to shew me will long dwell in my remembrance. There reigns in it gentleness and goodness; and if a tinge of the world's pride or vanities may mix with an expression so lovely, how may we chide that which is of earth for bearing some colour of its original? Long, long will I remember your features, and bless God that I leave my noble deliverer united with"——

She stopped short—her eyes filled with tears. She hastily wiped them, and answered to the anxious enquiries of Rowena—"I am well, lady—well. But my heart swells when I think of Torquilstone and the lists of Templestowe.—Farewell. One, the most trifling part of my duty, remains undischarged. Accept this casket—startle not at its contents."

Rowena opened the small silver-chased casket, and perceived a carcanet, or necklace, with ear-jewels, of diamonds, which were visibly of immense value.

"It is impossible," she said, tendering back

the casket. "I dare not accept a gift of such consequence."

"Yet keep it, lady," returned Rebecca.—"You have power, rank, command, influence; we have wealth, the source both of our strength and weakness; the value of these toys, ten times multiplied, would not influence half so much as your slightest wish. To you, therefore, the gift is of little value—and to me, what I part with is of much less. Let me not think you deem so wretchedly ill of my nation as your commons believe. Think ye that I prize these sparkling fragments of stone above my liberty? or that my father values them in comparison to the honour of his only child? Accept them, lady—to me they are valueless. I will never wear jewels more."

"You are then unhappy," said Rowena, struck with the manner in which Rebecca uttered the last words. "O, remain with us—the counsel of holy men will wean you from your unhappy law, and I will be a sister to you."

"No, lady," answered Rebecca, the same calm melancholy reigning in her soft voice and

beautiful features—"that may not be. I may not change the faith of my fathers like a garment unsuited to the climate in which I seek to dwell, and unhappy, lady, I will not be. He, to whom I dedicate my future life, will be my comforter, if I do His will."

"Have you then convents, to one of which you mean to retire?" asked Rowena.

"No, lady," said the Jewess; "but among our people, since the time of Abraham downward, have been women who have devoted their thoughts to Heaven, and their actions to works of kindness to men, tending the sick, feeding the hungry, and relieving the distressed. Among these will Rebecca be numbered. Say this to thy lord, should he enquire after the fate of her whose life he saved."

There was an involuntary tremor in Rebecca's voice, and a tenderness of accent, which perhaps betrayed more than she would willingly have expressed. She hastened to bid Rowena adieu.

"Farewell," she said. "May He, who made

both Jew and Christian, shower down on you his choicest blessings! The bark that wafts us hence will be under weigh e'er we can reach the port."

She glided from the apartment, leaving Rowena surprised as if a vision had passed before her. The fair Saxon related the singular conference to her husband, on whose mind it made a deep impression. He lived long and happily with Rowena, for they were attached to each other by the bonds of early affection, and they loved each other the more, from recollection of the obstacles which had impeded their union. Yet it would be enquiring too curiously to ask, whether the recollection of Rebecca's beauty and magnanimity did not recur to his mind more frequently than the fair descendant of Alfred might altogether have approved.

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and romantic monarch, perished all the projects which his ambition and his generosity had formed; and to him may be applied, with a slight alteration, the lines composed by Johnson for Charles of Sweden—

His fate was destined to a foreign strand,
A petty fortress and a "humble" hand;
He left the name at which the world grew pale,
To point a moral, or adorn a TALE.

THE END.

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